

The Cereal **KILLINGS**

CHAPTER FIVE

**OFFICIAL
PROGRAM**

\$2.50 \$2.95 Canada



**BIG BRAWL ISSUE
FEATURING**

**BATTLIN'
BURT**

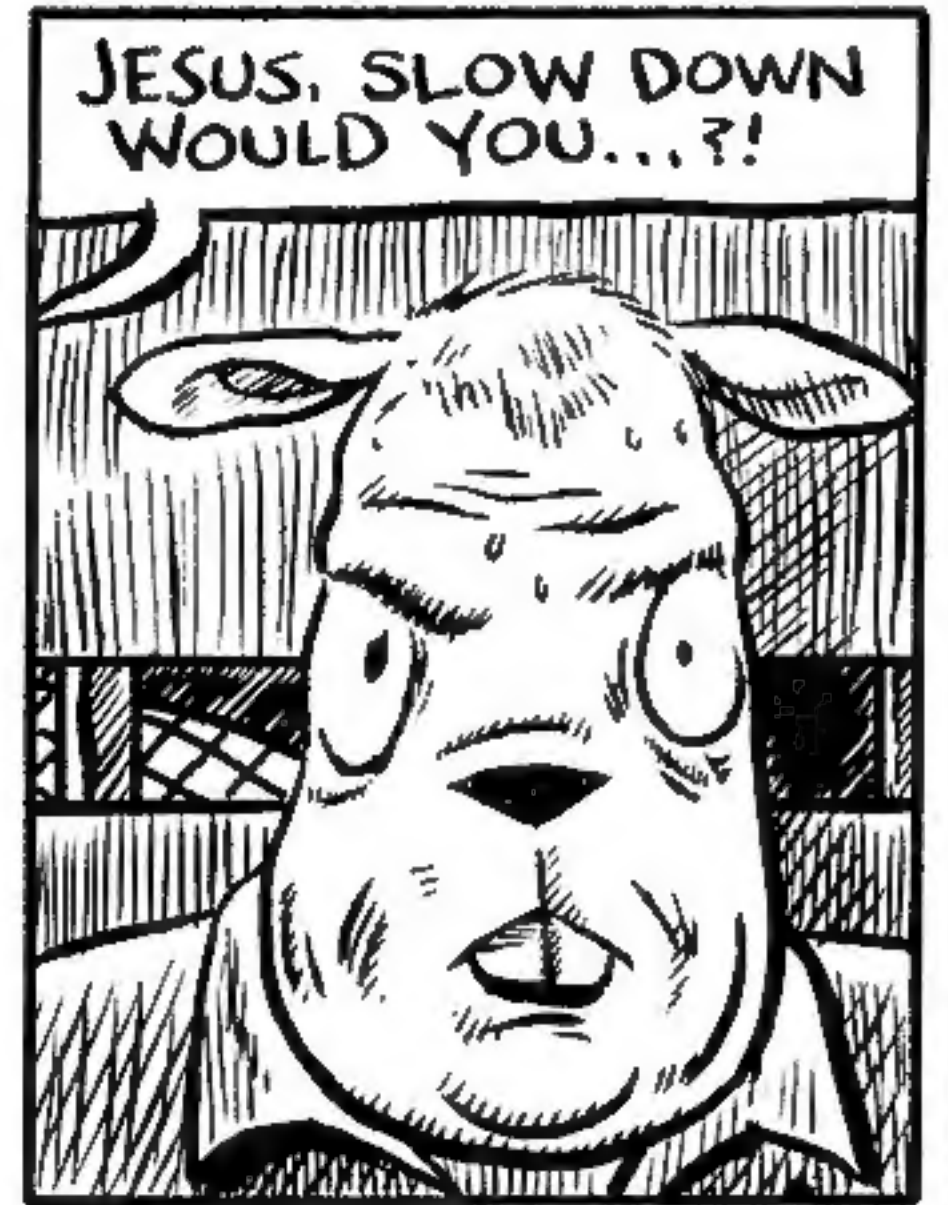
A James Sturm/Fantagraphics Books Production

The Cereal
KILLINGS



Chapter Five:
Mourning in America





HAVE YOU EVER SEEN
SUCH A SKIMPY SPREAD?

A DISGRACE.

HEY, ARCH, GIMME ONE
OF THOSE STOGIES.

YEA, SURE, BURT.

WHITEFISH SALAD?!
THEY CALL THAT
WHITEFISH SALAD?

ALL I TASTED WAS
MAYONNAISE...

AND WHAT ABOUT
THE LOX...

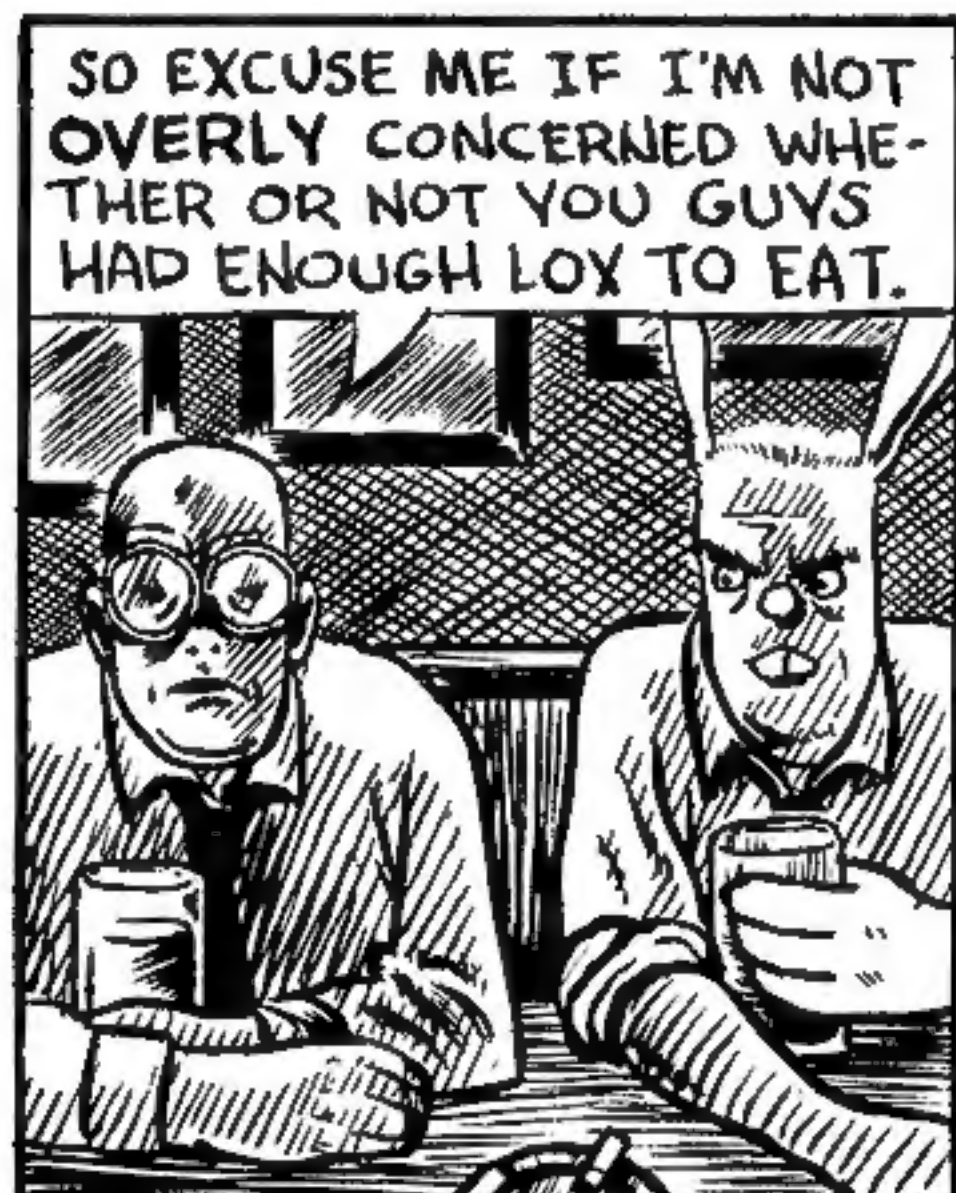
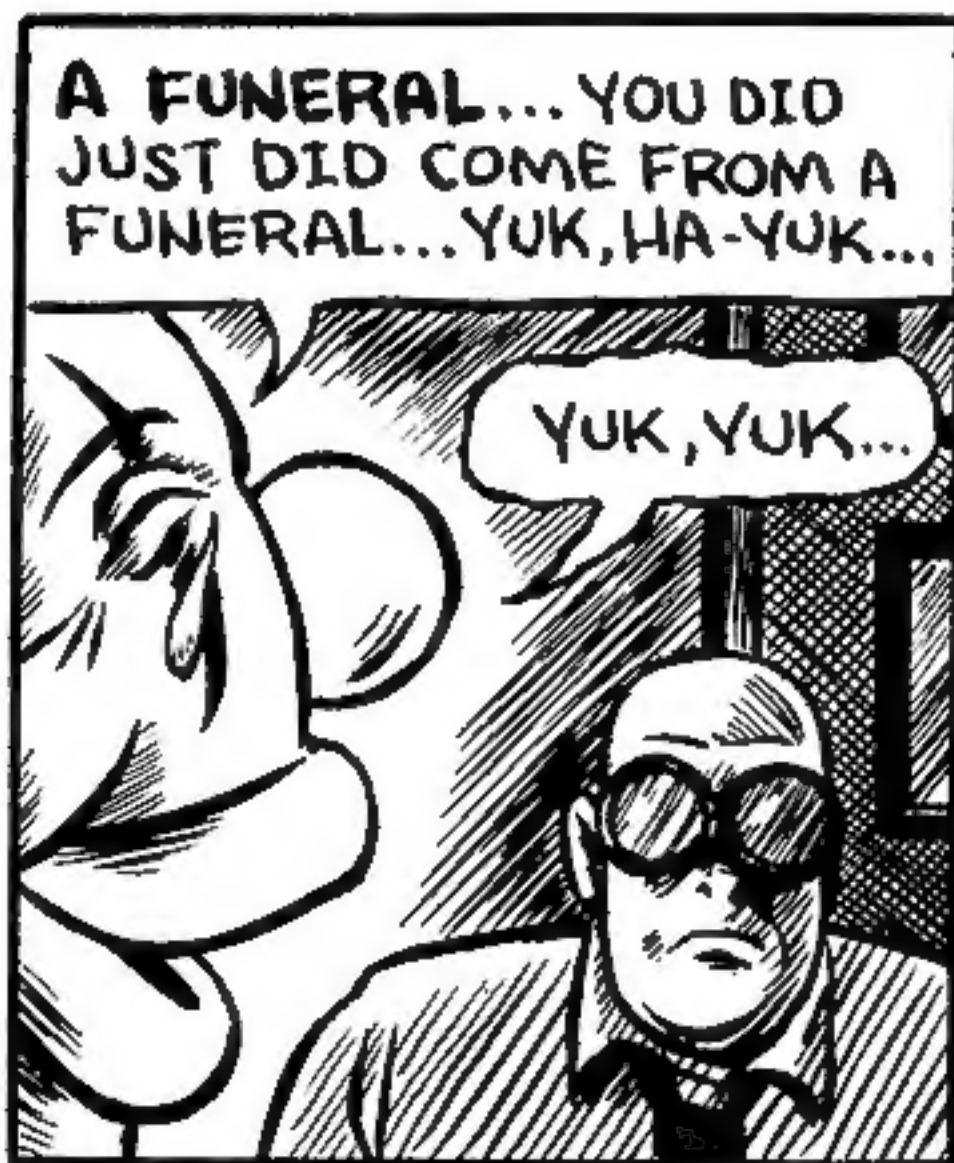
FOUR PIECES FOR
THIRTY PEOPLE

A DISGRACE.

WHEN I KICK IT
THERE'LL BE A FEAST,
NOBODY'LL GO HUNGRY!

YEA, BECAUSE YOU WON'T BE THERE TO EAT ALL THE FOOD!

YUK, YUK,
HA-YUK





EVEN IF HE DID HAVE INSURANCE, IT WOULD HAVE DONE HIM NO GOOD, BEING A SUICIDE AND ALL...



SHUT YOUR GODDAMN MOUTH! SHIRLAND DIDN'T DO HIMSELF IN!



HE DROVE HIS CAR OFF A FUCKIN' BRIDGE, FRANK. WHAT DO YOU CALL THAT?



AN ACCIDENT.



I HEARD SHIRLAND WAS DOING O.K.. HAD SOME BOOK DEAL IN THE WORKS.



I HEARD IT WAS A CABLE T.V. SHOW...



AND WHO DID YOU HEAR THAT FROM? SHIRLAND, RIGHT? RIGHT?



PROBABLY WHILE HE WAS HITTING YOU UP FOR SOME DOUGH!

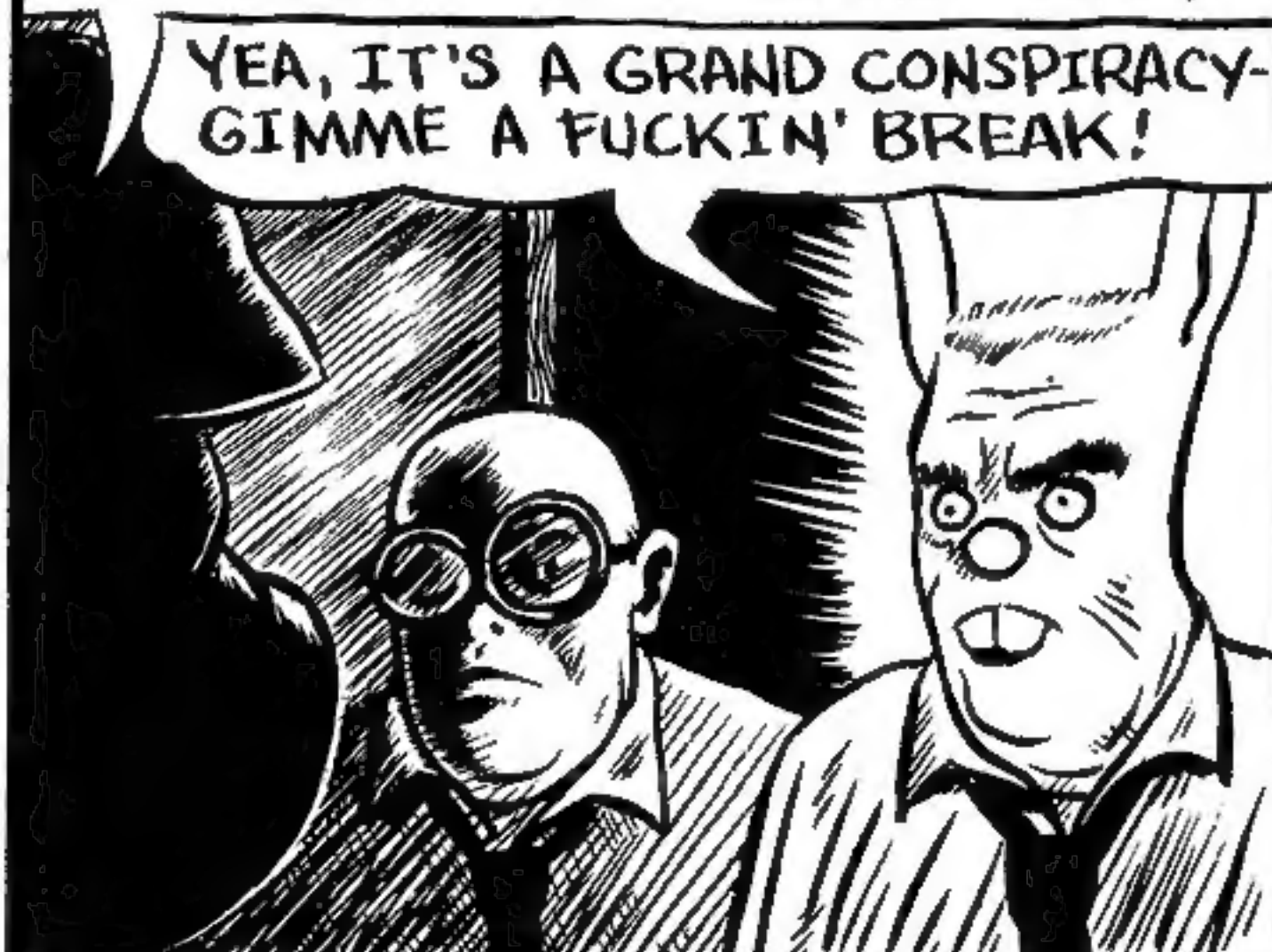


MAYBE HE WAS PUSHED OFF THE BRIDGE.



HE DID OWE LOTS OF PEOPLE MONEY.

YEA, IT'S A GRAND CONSPIRACY-
GIMME A FUCKIN' BREAK!



WELL, IT'S STILL HARD
TO BELIEVE HE'S GONE.



NOW IF YOU TOLD ME
SCHMEDLY DID HIMSELF
IN - THAT I'D BUY.



WHERE IS SCHMEDLY?
IT'S NOT LIKE HIM
TO MISS AN OPPOR-
TUNITY TO DRINK.



LAST TIME I SAW SCHMEDLY HE
WAS REALLY OUT OF SORTS...
SO WHAT'S NEW?



THAT OLD DRUNK WILL PROBABLY
OUTLIVE US ALL.

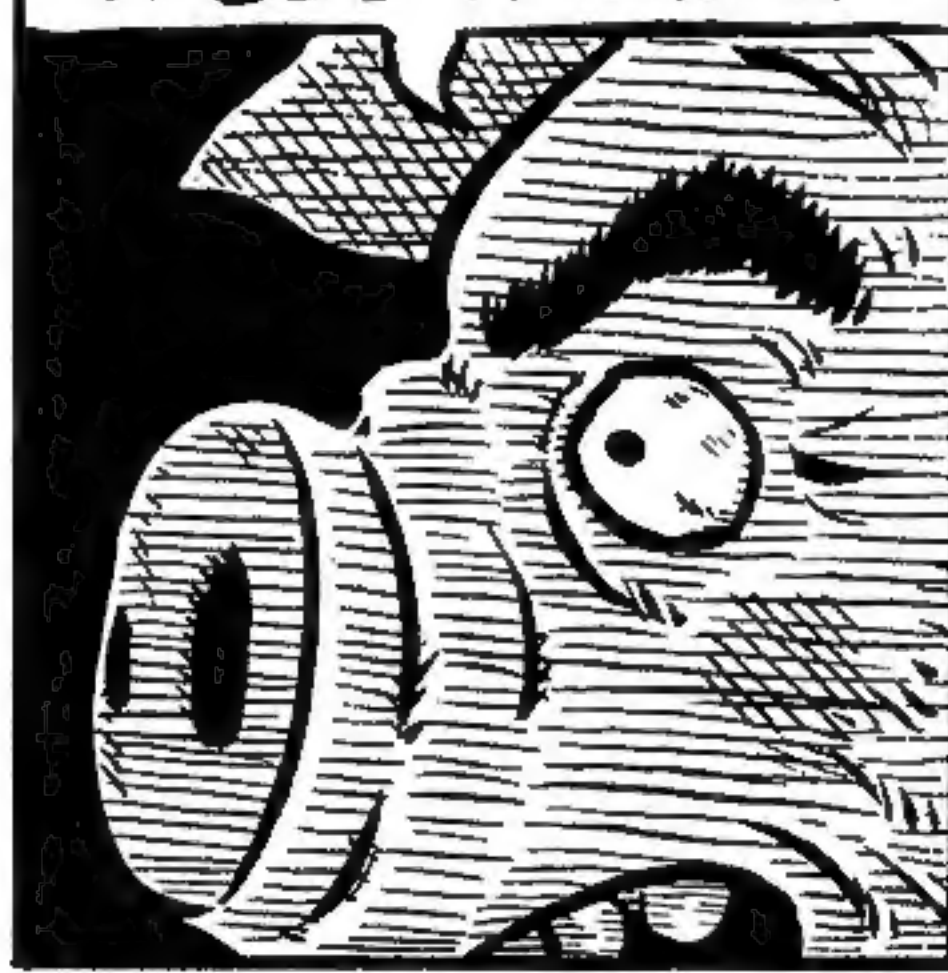
YEA, PROBABLY,
HYUK, YUK...



SPEAK FOR YOURSELF,
I'VE GOTTA LOT OF
MILES LEFT IN THIS
ENGINE ...!



RIGHT BURT! YOU'RE
JUST LIKE SHIRLAND-
A BIG TALKER!



SHOWS YOU WHAT YOU
KNOW, SUCK-FACE!
I'M SITTING ON SOME-
THING BIG RIGHT NOW!



WHAT PRAY TELL IS
THAT **BIG SHOT**?

I'M NOT AT LIBERTY
TO **DISCUSS** IT AT
THE PRESENT...



I WILL SAY THIS: **SNIP**
HIMSELF HAS TAKEN
A SPECIAL INTEREST
IN MY CAREER.



THAT'S FUNNY **BURT**,
BECAUSE **SNIP** AND I
ARE ALSO NEGOTIATING
A NEW PRODUCT...



NOTHING PERSONAL BUT
THIS IS DIFFERENT...
IT'S FOR REAL.



LISTEN HERE, **BURT**,
SNIP HIMSELF TOLD ME...

YEA, YEA, YEA, I KNOW
ALL ABOUT YOUR SCARE
CROW-BLAH, BLAH, BLAH.



IS **CHARLIE** STILL
HELPING YOU OR IS HE
JUST LEADING YOU TO
PINK ELEPHANTS,
HAW HAW HAW



PINK ELEPHANTS
YUK HYUK **CHARLIE**
HAW YUK
YUK HAW YUK



ONE DAY YOU ARE
GOING TO GO TOO
FAR, **BURT**!



YEA? AND THEN
WHAT, **ASSHOLE**!?



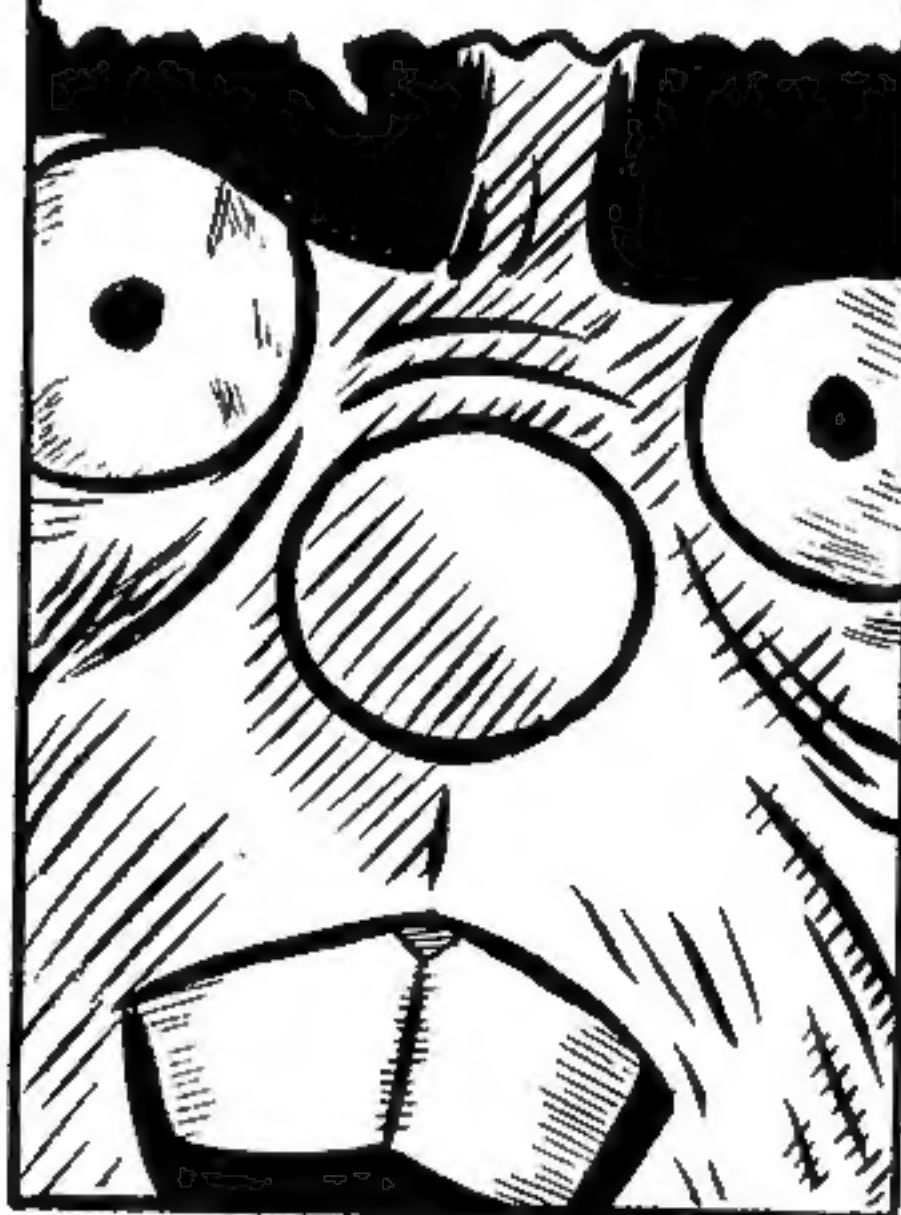
THEN... WHOOPS!



JEEZ, I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT BURT.



YOU ASSHOLE, YOU SPILLED BEER ON ME!!



YOU DID THAT ON PURPOSE!

HEY!



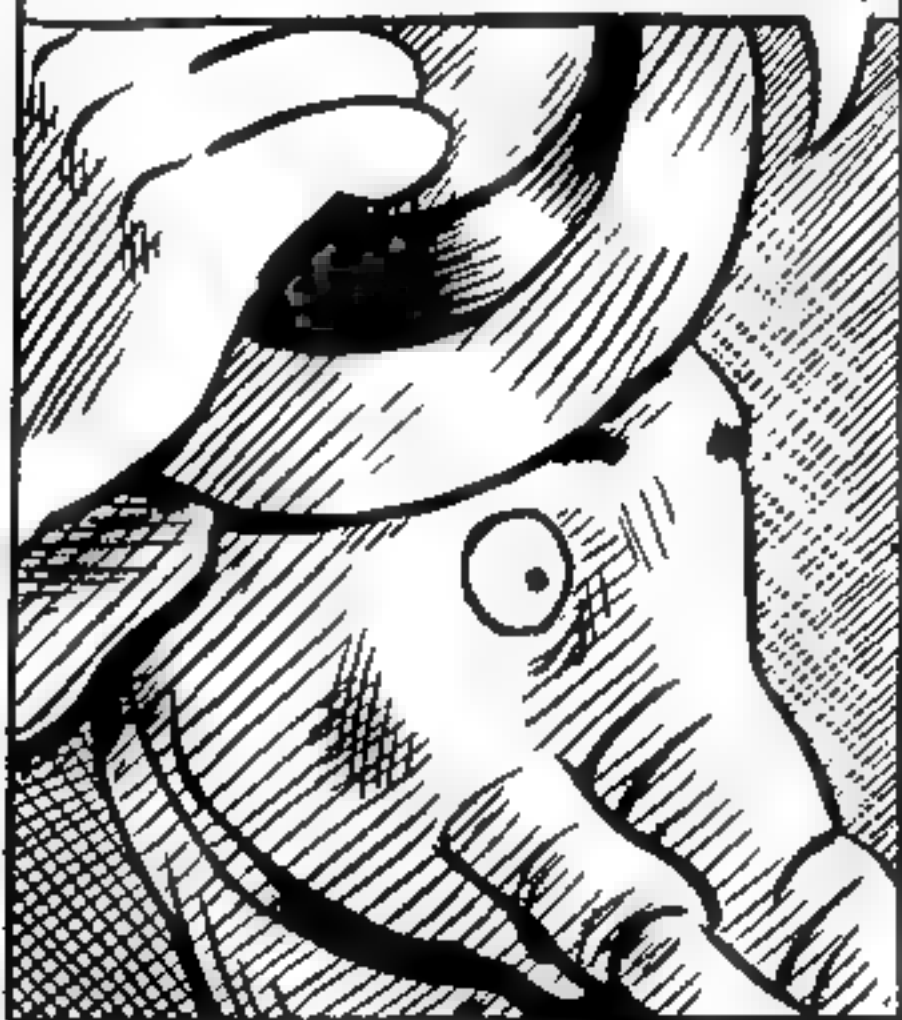
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU GUYS DOING?! CUT IT OUT! YOU'RE MAKING A SCENE!



BREAK IT UP, FELLAS! WHAT ARE WE, ANIMALS?



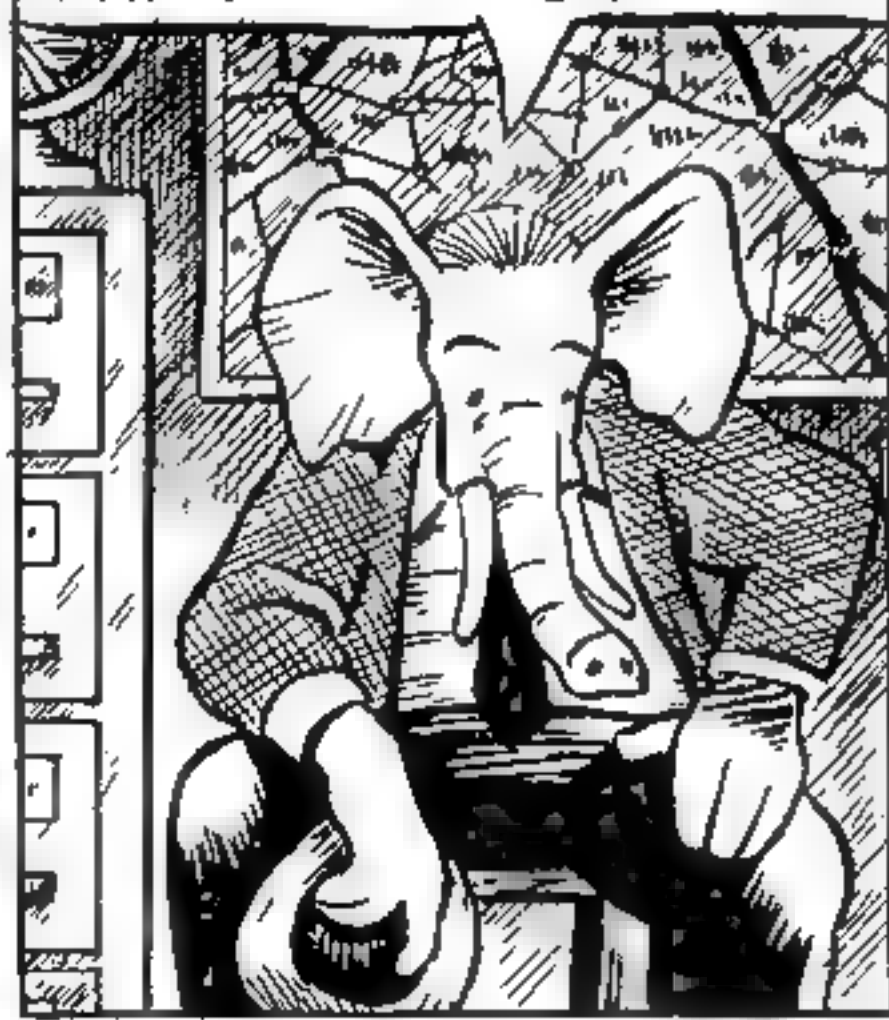
YES, THE RAISIN BRAN IS SELLING EXTREMELY WELL,



BUT RICE CRUNCHIES... THE ORDERS HAVE DOUBLED!



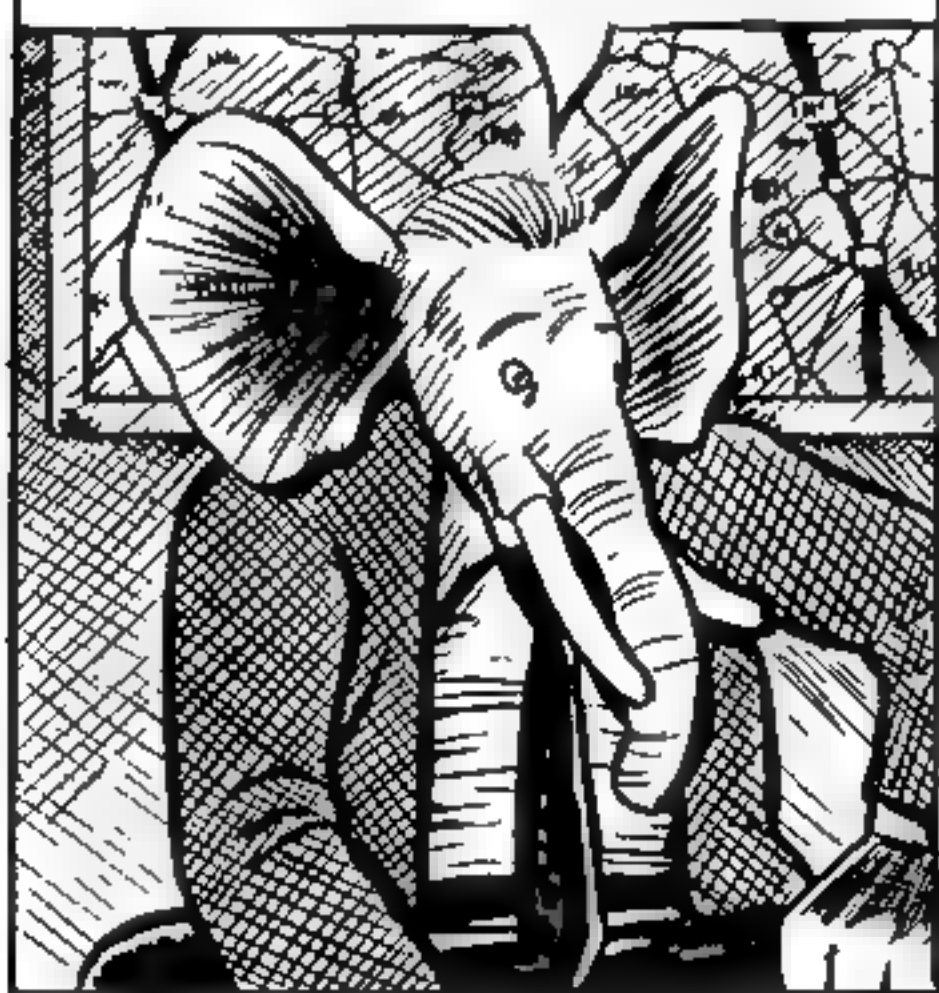
CAN BARELY KEEP THE SHELVES STOCKED.



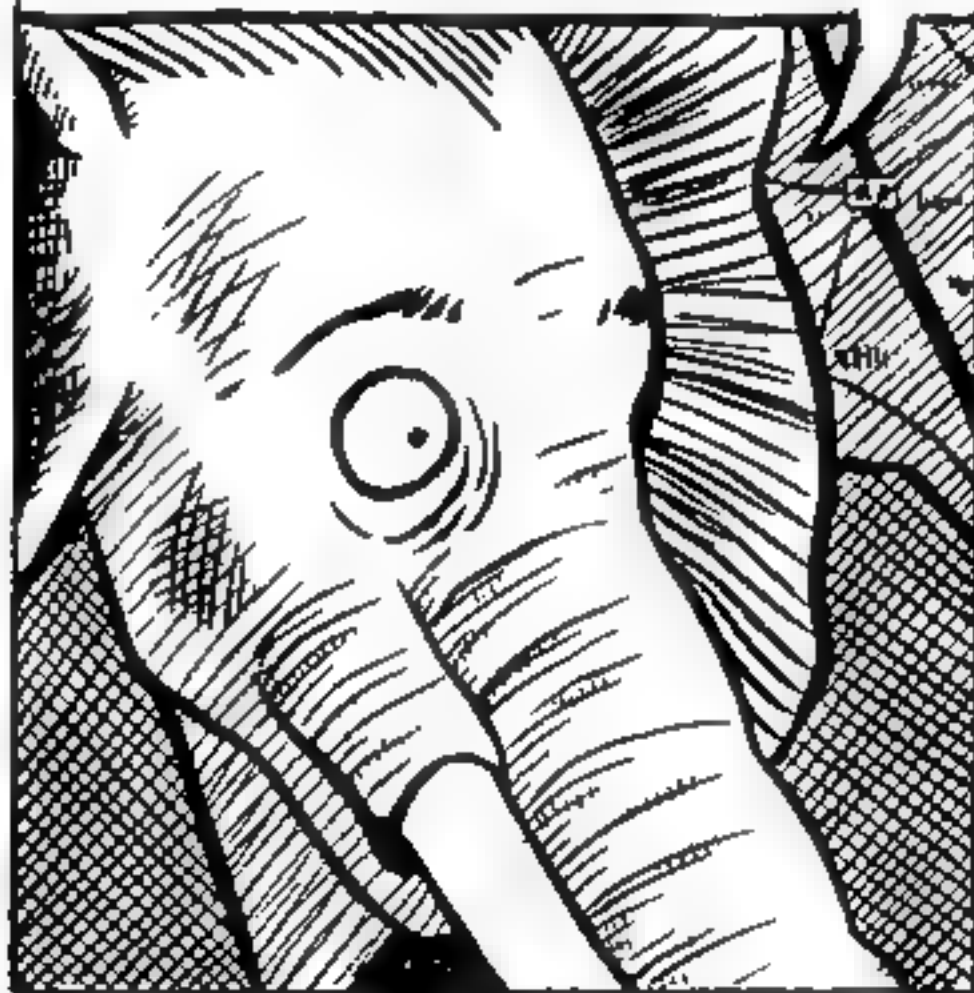
... AND HOW'S THE NEW CEREAL, SUGAR SQUIBBLES, SELLING?



I MEAN, WHAT THE HELL IS A SQUIBBLE, ANYWAY?



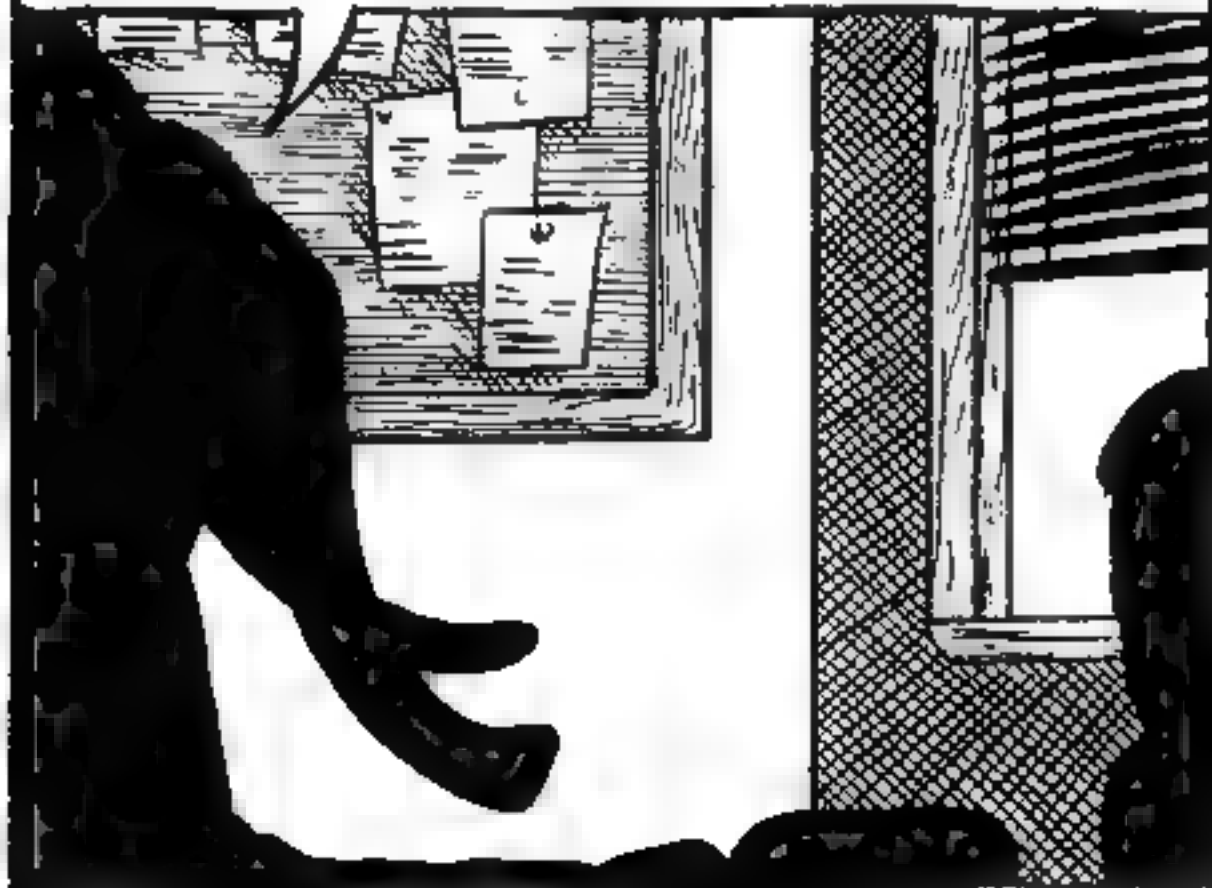
BESIDES, THEY'RE TOO MUCH LIKE RICE CRUNCHIES.



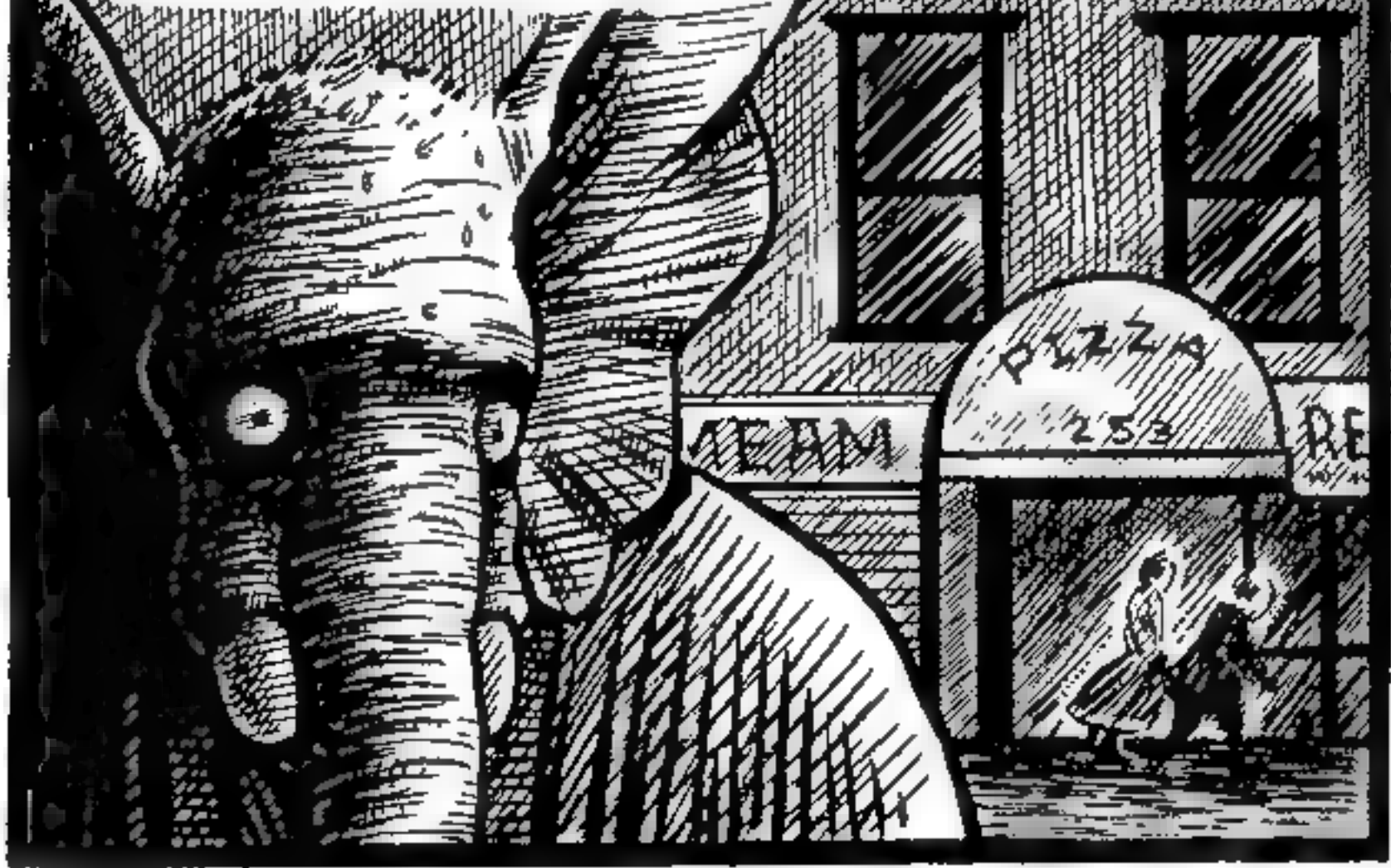
TELL ME, ANY LUCK IN MASON COUNTY?



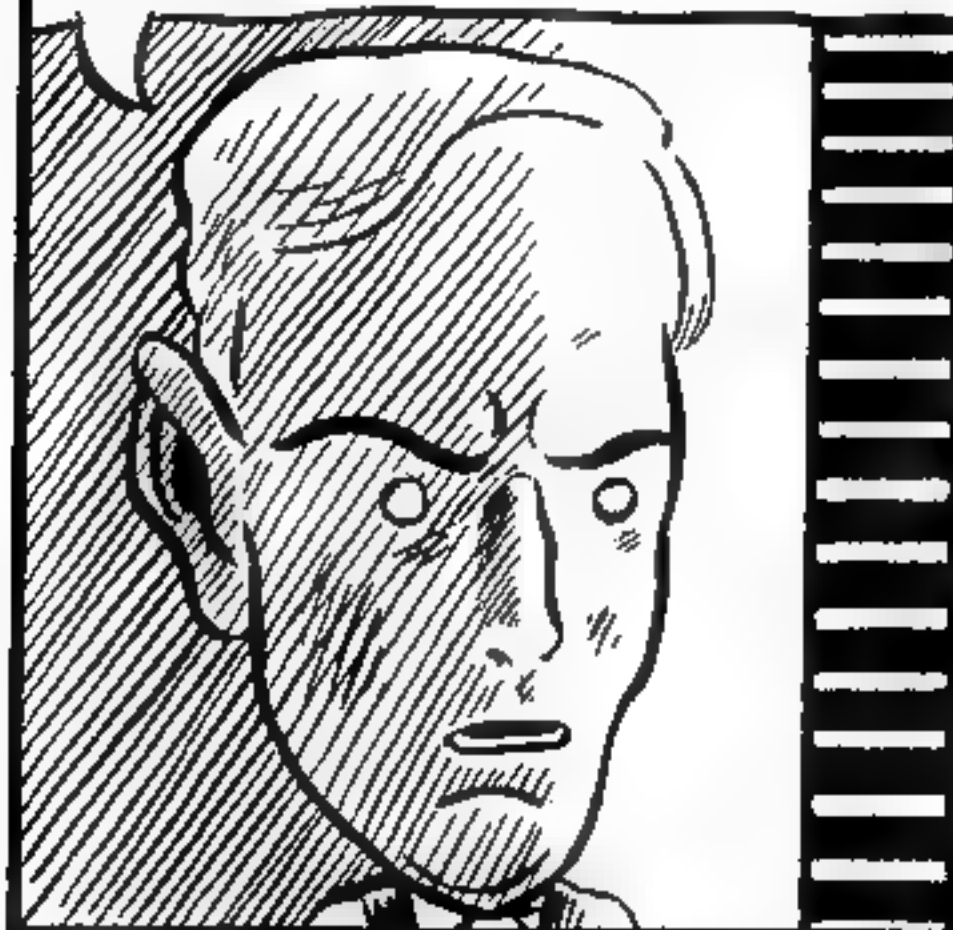
SAME STORY AS HOWARD AND ROSS, NOBODY'LL TOUCH OUR STUFF, THEY ALL SEEM CONTENT WITH THAT ONE LOCAL BRAND...



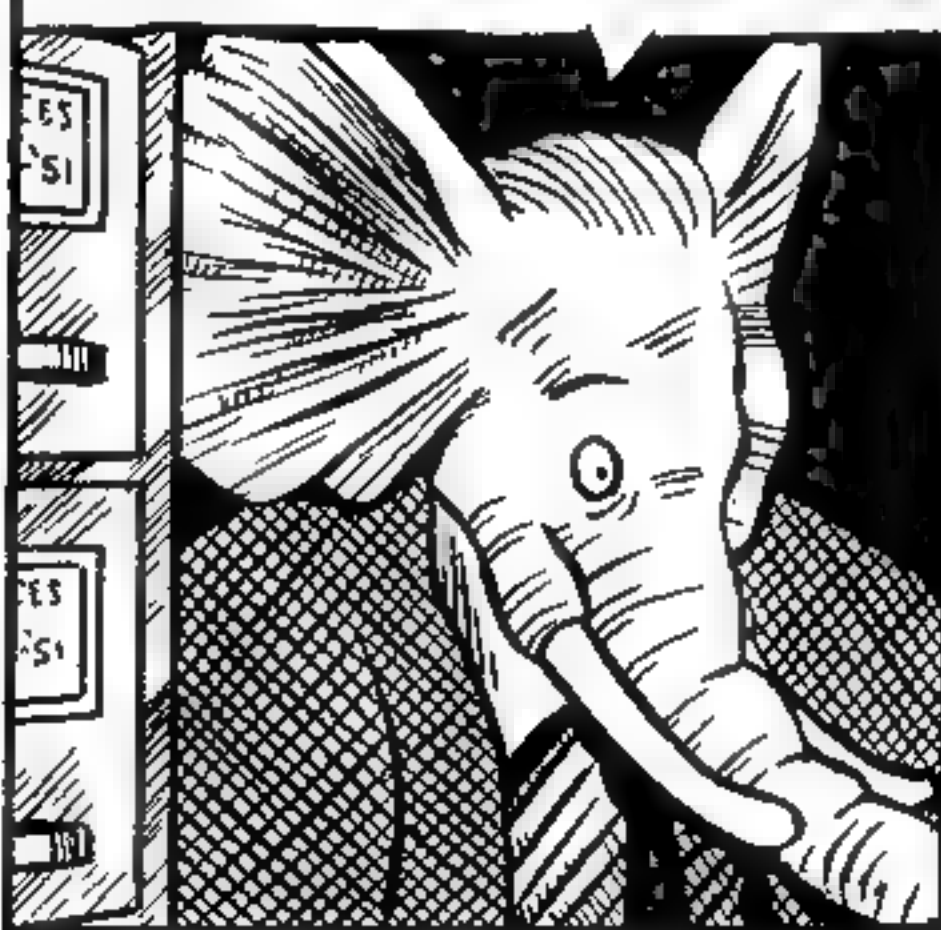
THE CORN CEREAL...



YES, THE CORN CEREAL,
PUT OUT BY THAT
SCARECROW FELLOW.



YEA, THE THIRTY OR SO
STORES IN THE COUNTY
ARE EXTREMELY LOYAL...



I AM QUITE FAMILIAR
WITH THIS SITUATION.



I WOULD HATE TO THINK
OUR FRIEND THE SCARE-
CROW IS INDULGING IN
UNFAIR BUSINESS
PRACTICES.



SCHMEDLY, I WANT YOU
TO GO BACK TO MASON
COUNTY AND GET A HOLD
OF THIS SCARECROW...



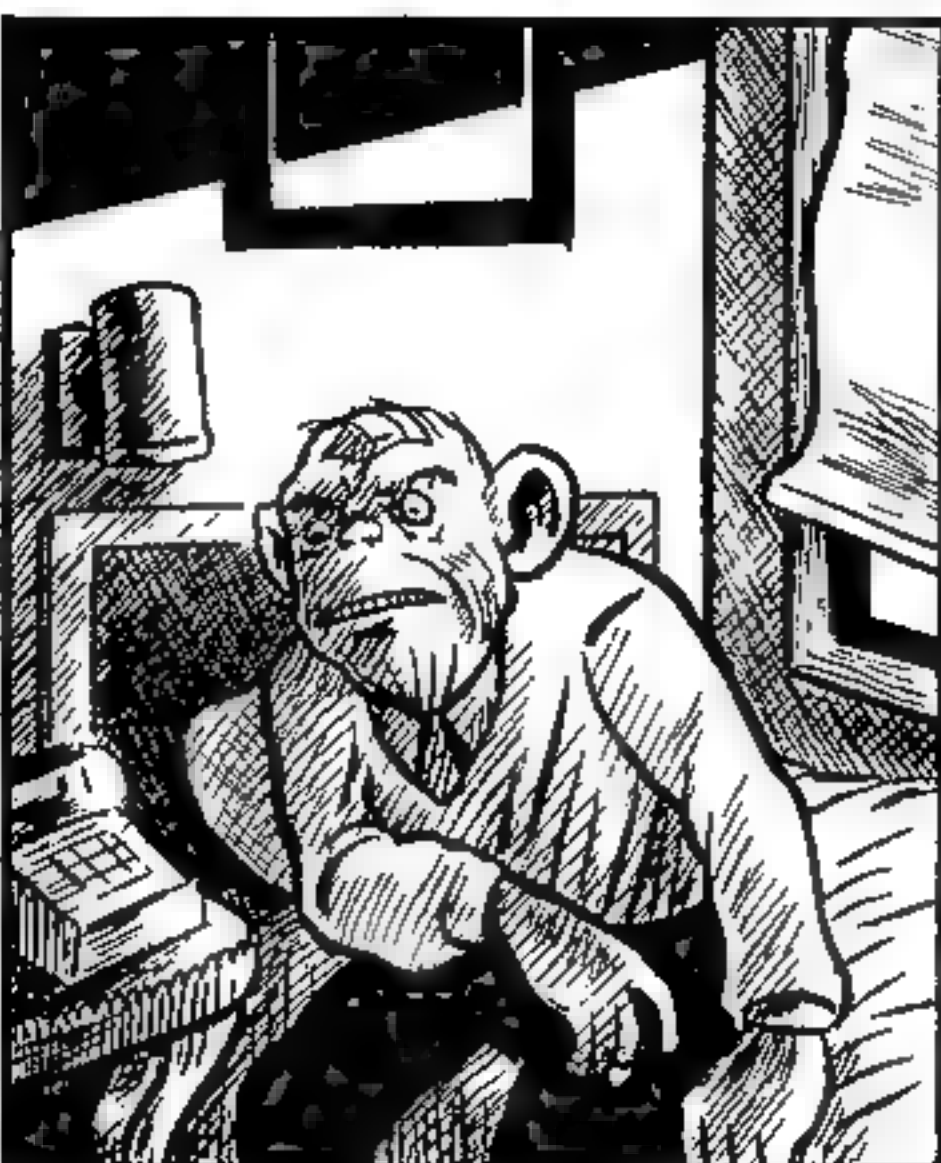
TELL HIM I WANT TO
MEET WITH HIM -
CONVINCE HIM OF
THE SINCERITY
OF MY INTENT.

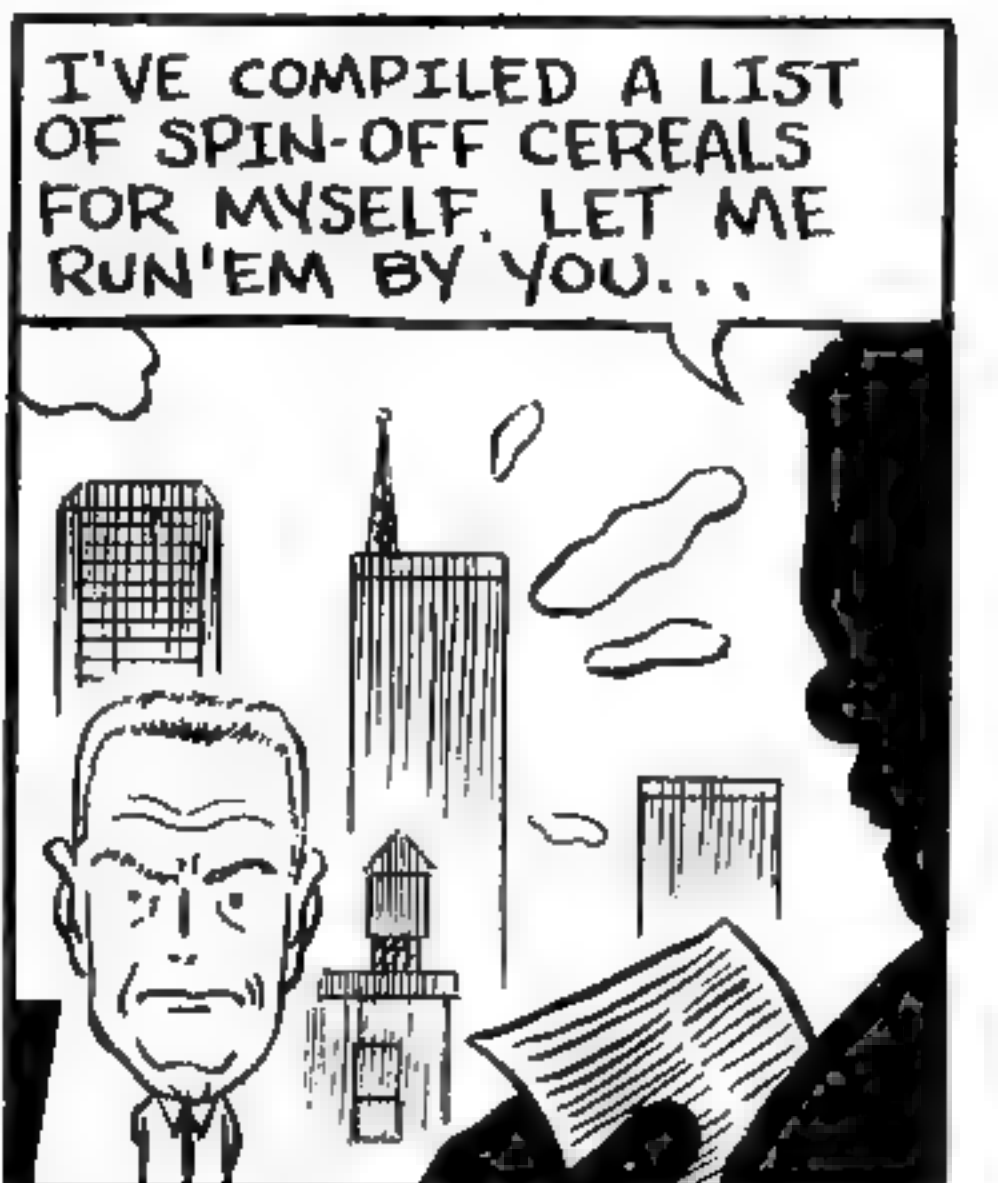
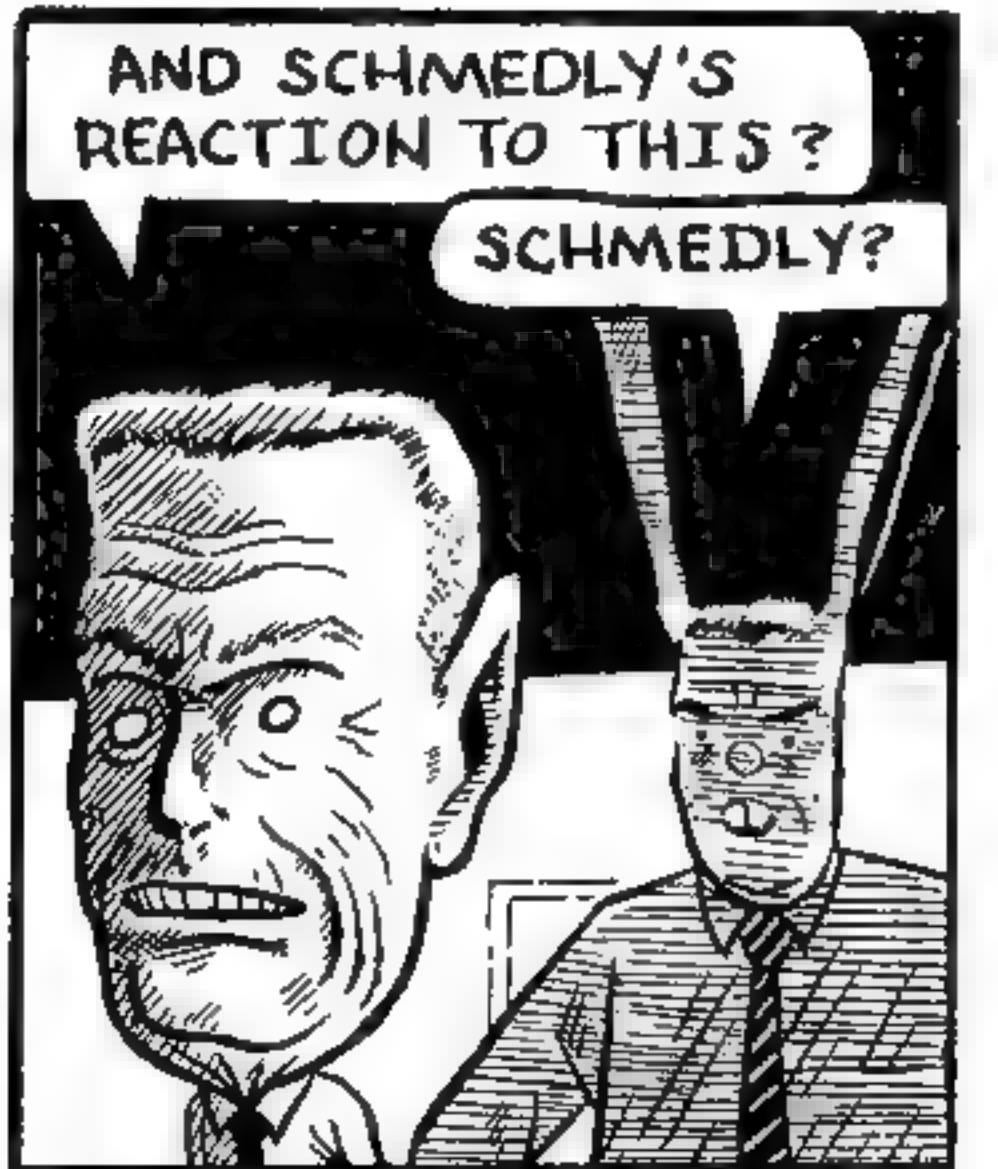
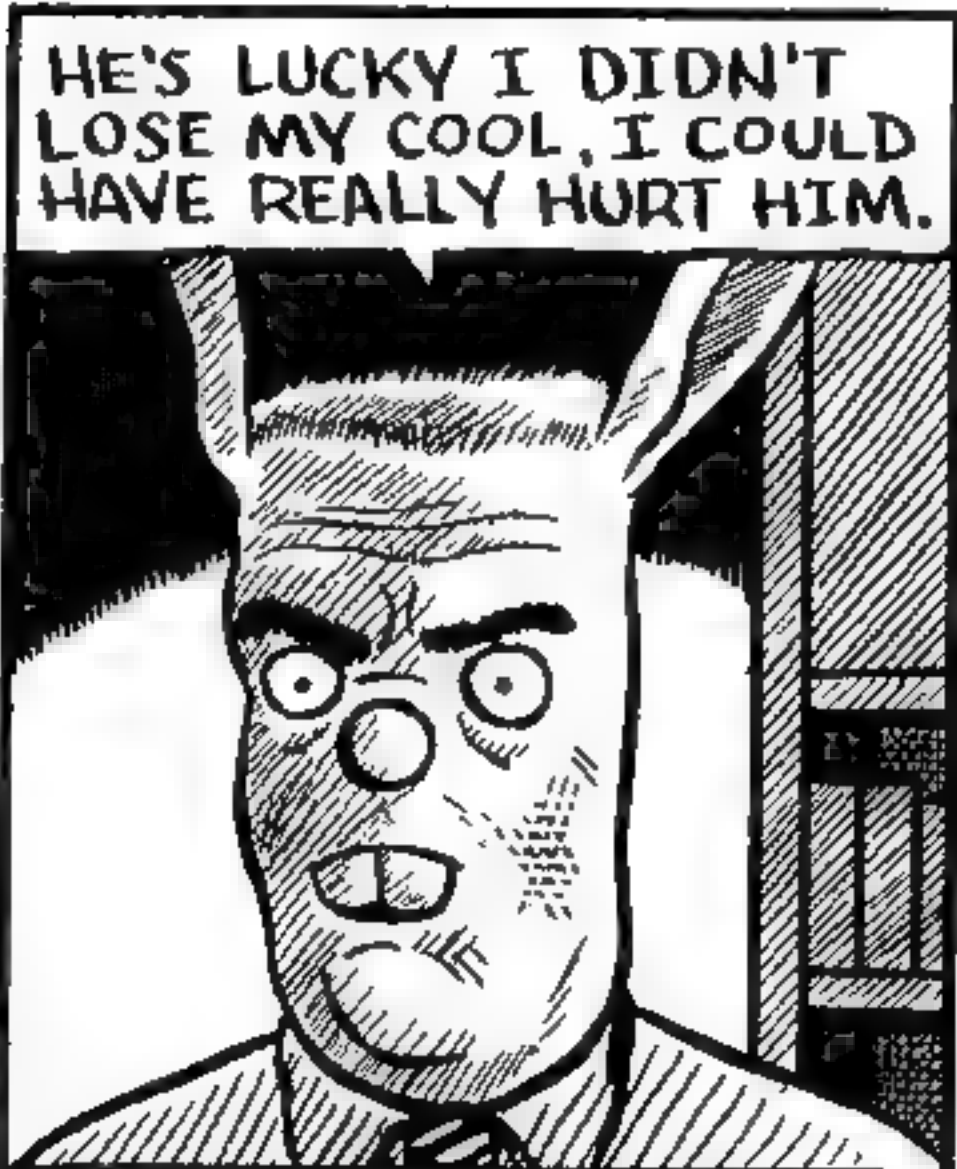
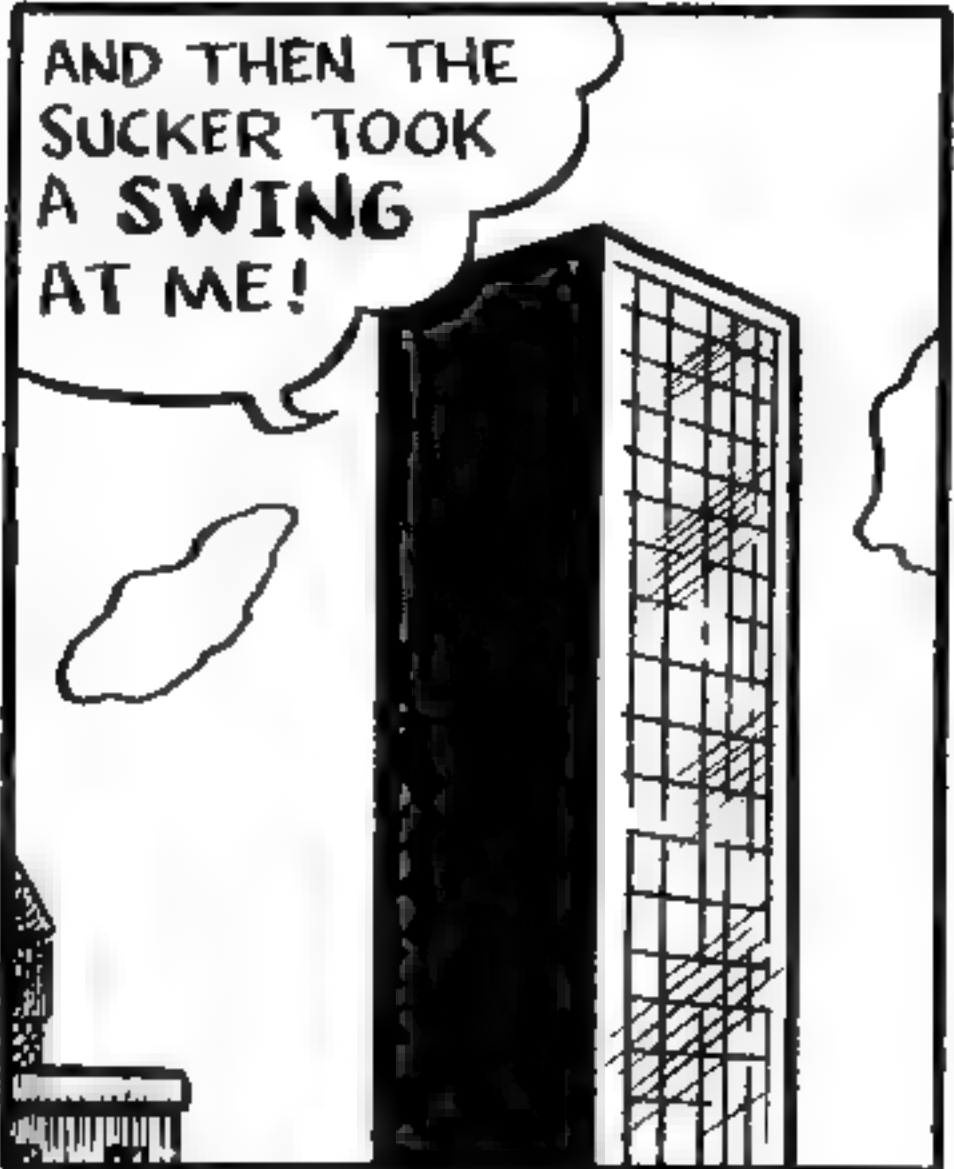
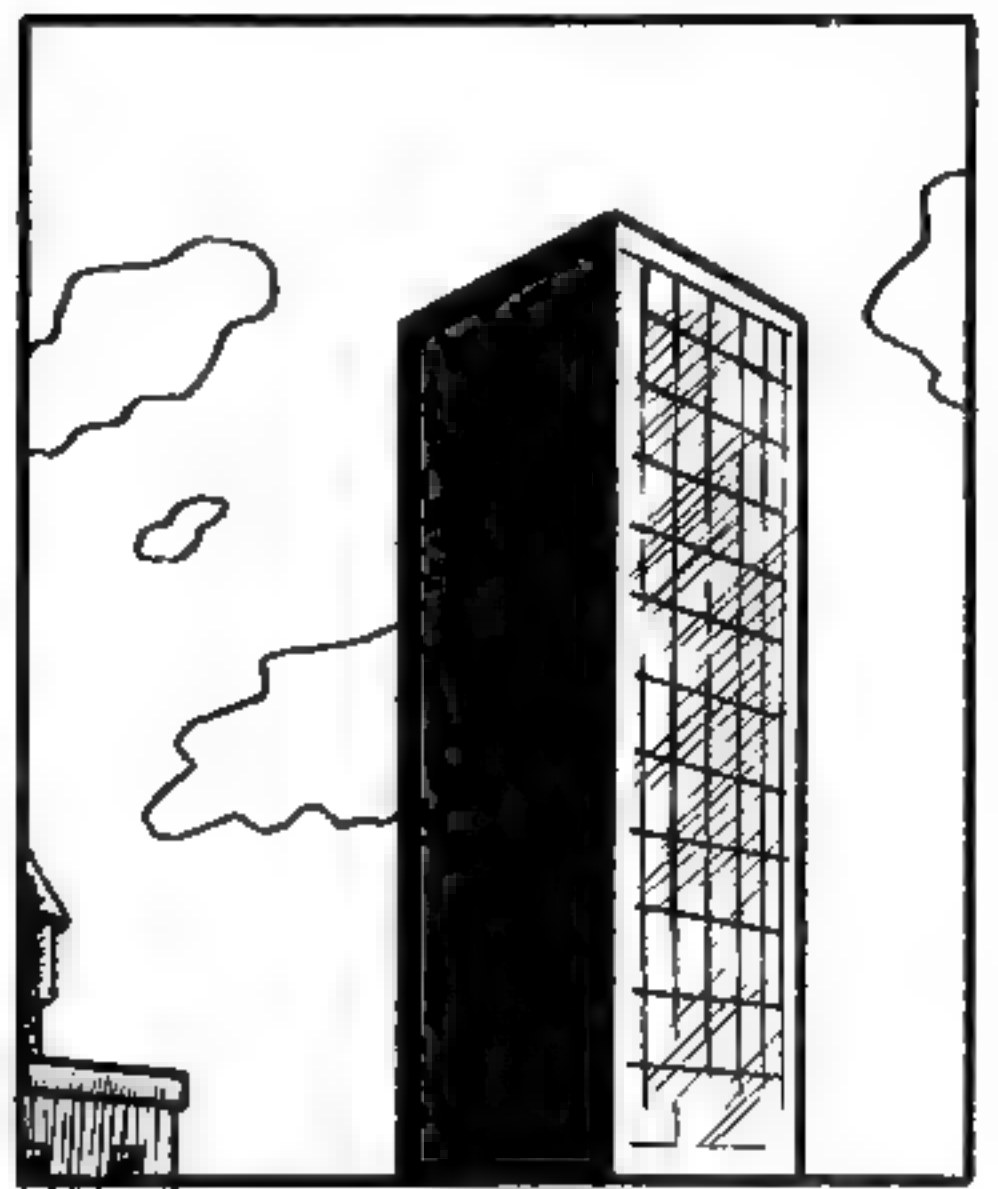
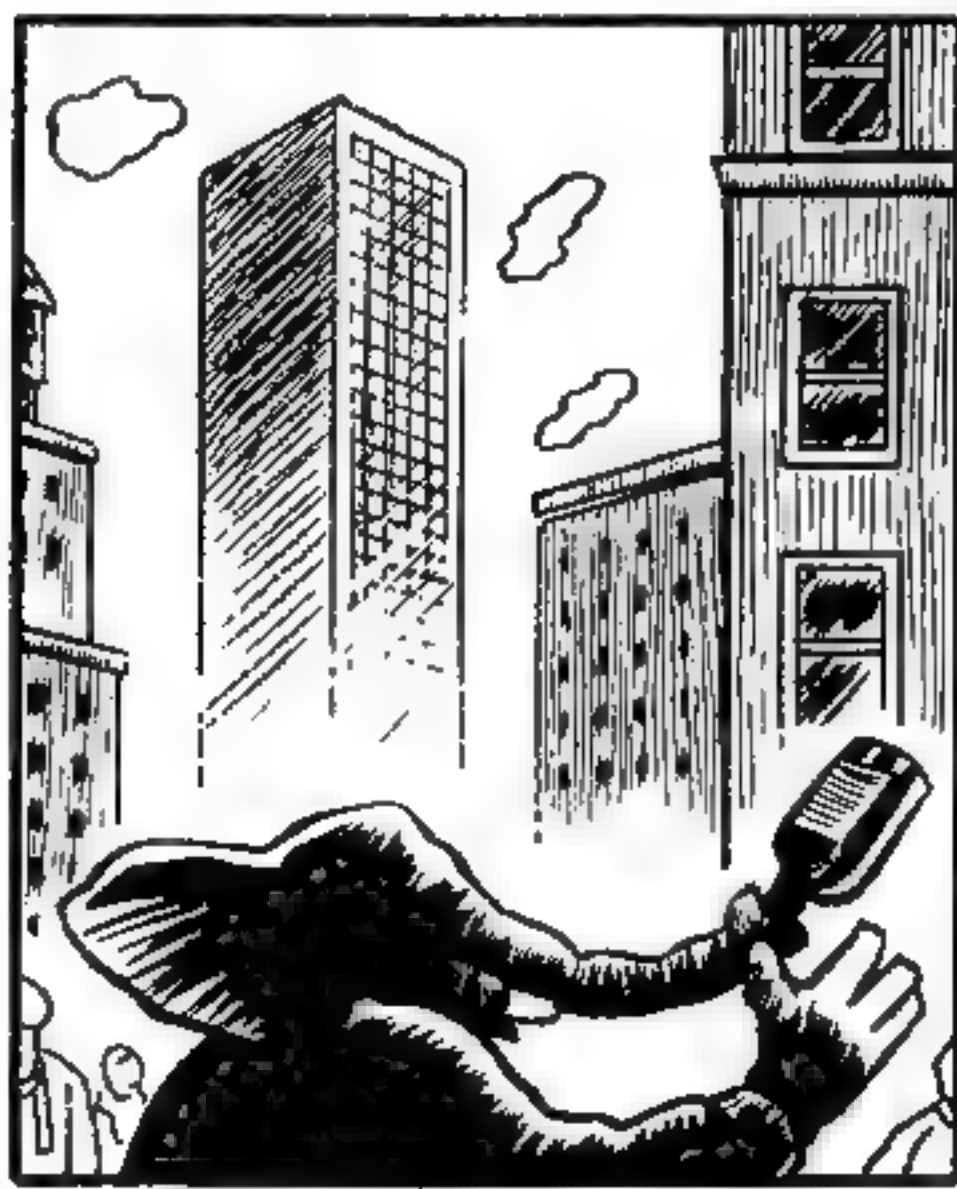


YOU GODDAMN
SON OF A BITCH



LYING PIECE OF
DRUNKEN FILTH





BUT YOU ALREADY
DUMPED HIS CEREAL
BEFORE HE DIED.



SALES OF KELCOG CEREALS
DROPPED FOR THE FOURTH
CONSECUTIVE QUARTER.



SHIRLAND'S DEATH WILL
ONLY MAKE MATTERS
WORSE. MORE NEGATIVE
PRESS...THE MEDIA...



"CEREAL KILLER"
BAH! SCAVENGERS!



AND NOW CARBUNKLE...

CARBUNKLE? WHAT'S HE
GOT TO DO WITH IT?



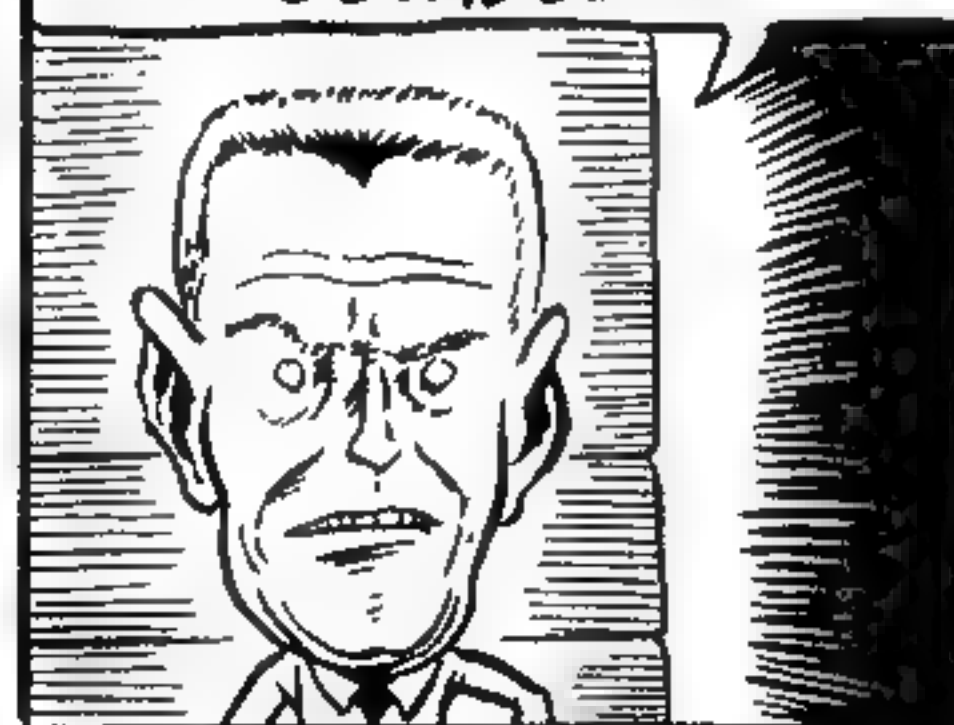
LET'S JUST SAY THAT HE'S
BEEN CURIOUS ABOUT
THINGS WHICH SHOULD
NOT CONCERN HIM.



CARBUNKLE? YOU'RE
GIVING HIM TOO
MUCH CREDIT.



IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME
TO BELIEVE THAT CAR-
BUNKLE'S SUDDEN INTEREST
IN PERSONS AND EVENTS
WHICH OCCURRED SEV-
ERAL DECADES AGO...



ARE AS BENIGN AS
HE WOULD LEAD US TO
BELIEVE...

YOU THINK HE'S
TRYING TO STIR
UP TROUBLE, HUH?



THE PIE IS SHRINKING,
BURT, AND THERE ARE
THOSE DESPERATE TO
RETAIN THEIR PORTIONS.

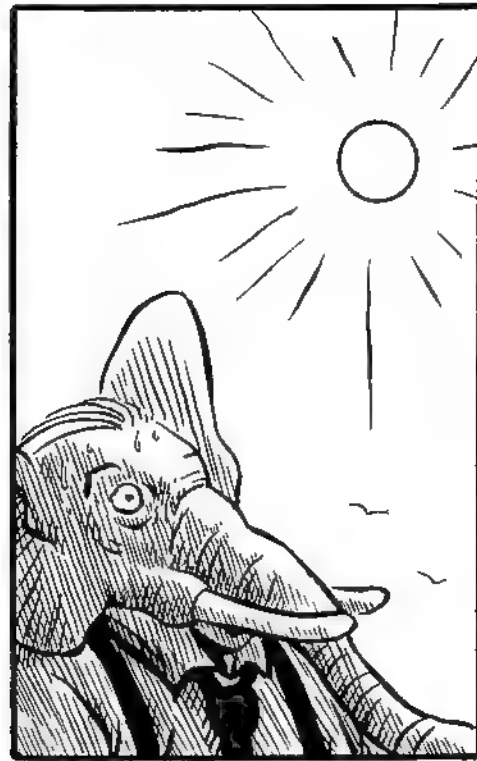
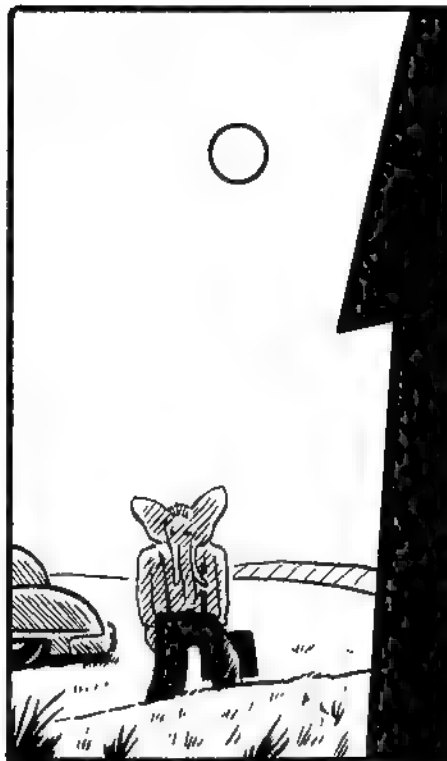
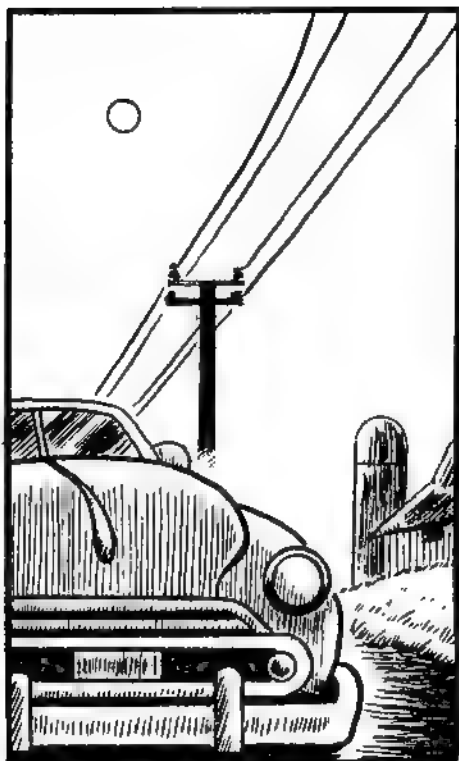


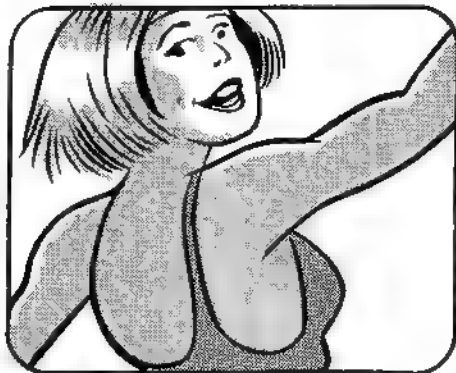
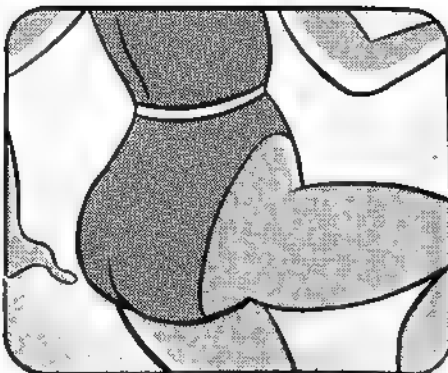
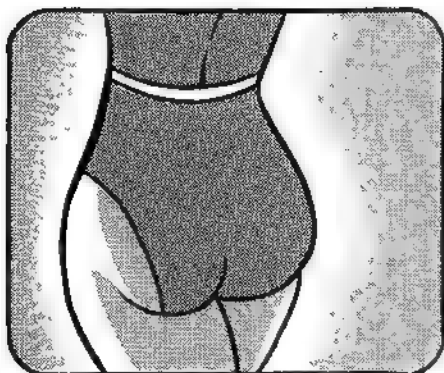
THEIR APPETITES
CAUSE THEM TO ACT
LIKE ANIMALS...



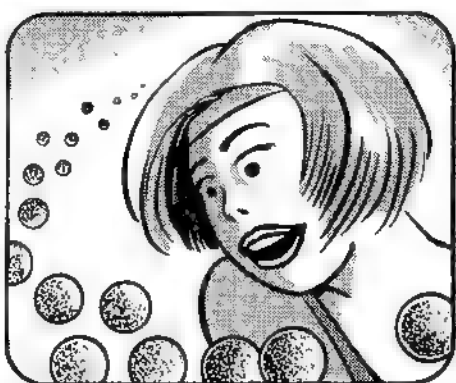
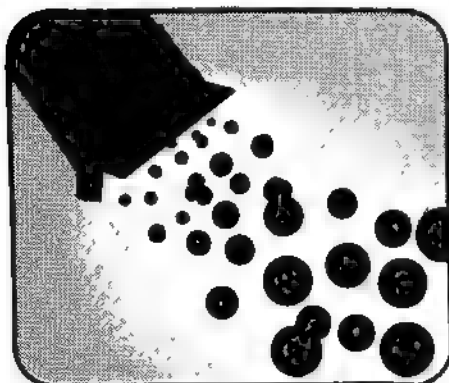
AND TO BE A DANGER TO
THE VERY INDUSTRY
WHICH IS OUR
LIVELIHOOD.



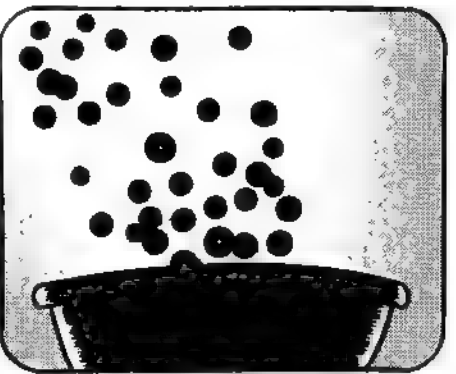
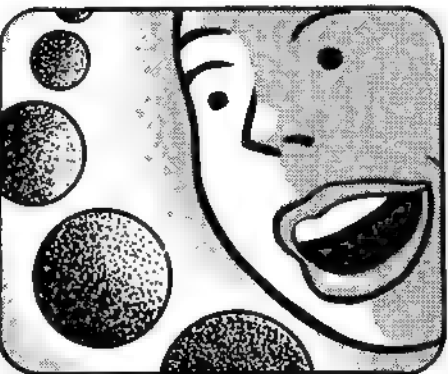




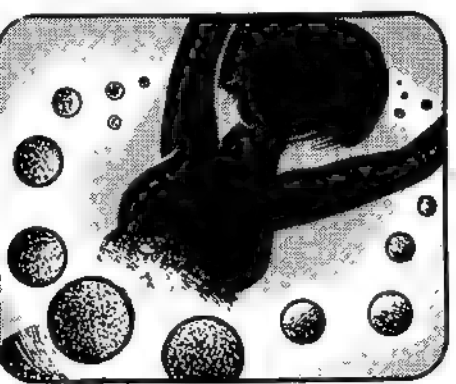
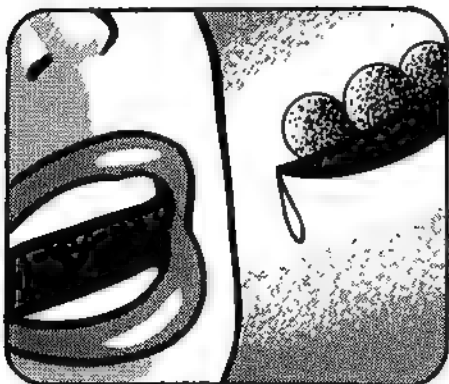
YOU WANT A GREAT TASTING CEREAL THAT WON'T SLOW YOU DOWN? THAT'S, LIKE, LOADED WITH



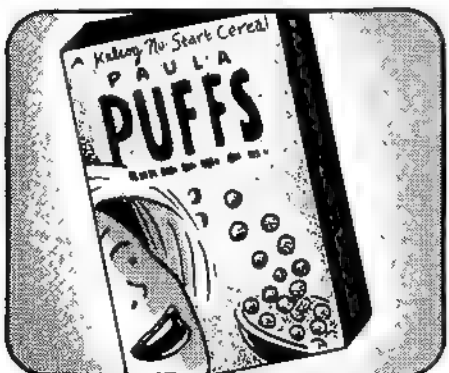
VIM, VIGOR, AND ENERGY? THAT HAS TOTALLY HEALTHY INGREDIENTS? THAT'S, LIKE, FAT-FREE?



WITH AN EXCITING TASTE THAT WILL CURL YOUR TOES AND MAKE YOU LAUGH? DO YOU WANT TO BE



BUFF AND WORKING OUT JUST ISN'T ENOUGH? NO NEED TO WORRY, NO NEED TO FUSS, BECAUSE



FOR BREAKFAST THERE'S PAULA PUFFS!

SHE'S THE HOTTEST THING GOING NOW! WORKOUT VIDEOS, MAGAZINE COVERS, PAULA'S STAR IS ON THE RISE AND KELCOG HAS JUST SIGNED HER ON!

WHAT'S BUFF?

BUFF? IT'S A... IT'S THE LINGO OF THE '90S... YESSIEEE CARBUNKLE, I'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO YOU...

YOU WERE RIGHT, HEALTHFOOD IS MORE THAN JUST A FAD - IT'S A TREND - AND KELCOG MUST MAKE A FIRM COMMITMENT TO IT...

BUT SNIP, I THOUGHT I WAS HERE TO DISCUSS MY PROJECT...

THAT'S WHAT WE'RE DOING.

HUH?

I SEE PAULA PUFFS AS PART OF KELCOG'S "NU-START" LINE OF CEREALS...

THAT CORN CEREAL IDEA YOU HAD, A GOOD START. A SPRINGBOARD TOWARD BETTER IDEAS.

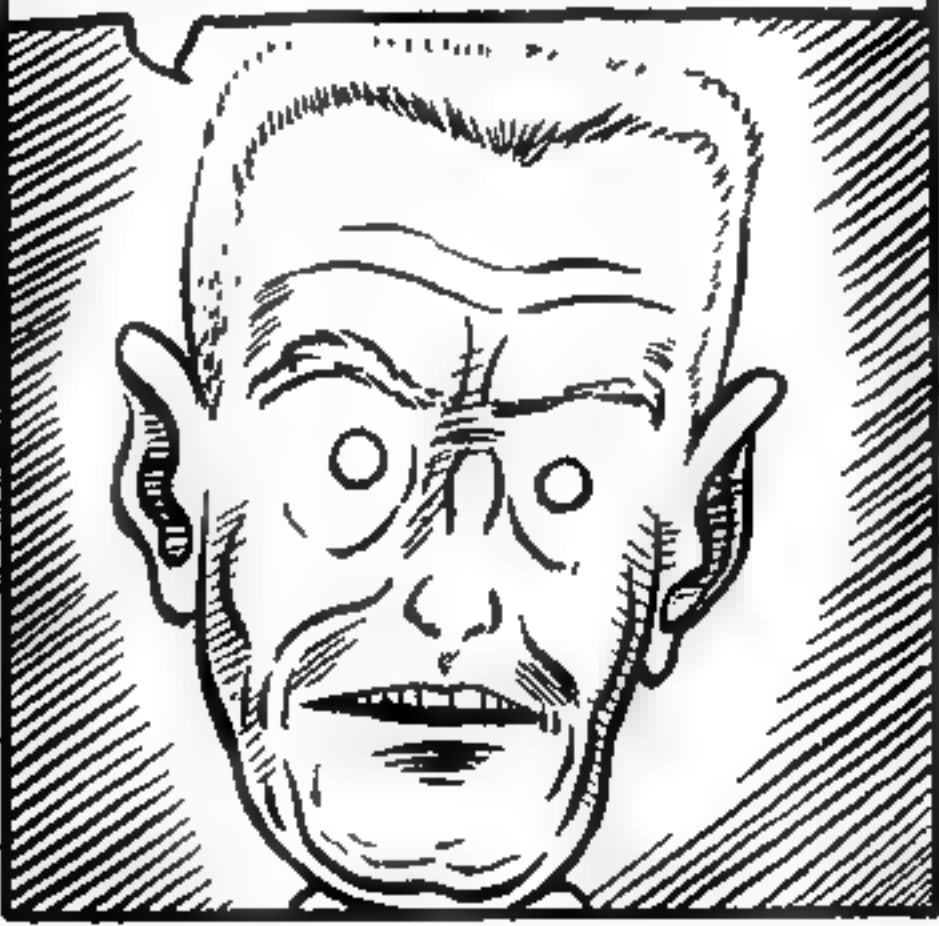
OUR MARKET RESEARCH SAYS THAT THE MIDDLE-AMERICA HEARTLAND PITCH IS NO LONGER EFFECTIVE.

BUT THE SCARECROW SEEMS LIKELY...

THAT'S YESTERDAY, CARBUNKLE.

A NEW DAY HAS DAWNED AND WITH IT A NEW MESSAGE MUST BE HEARD!

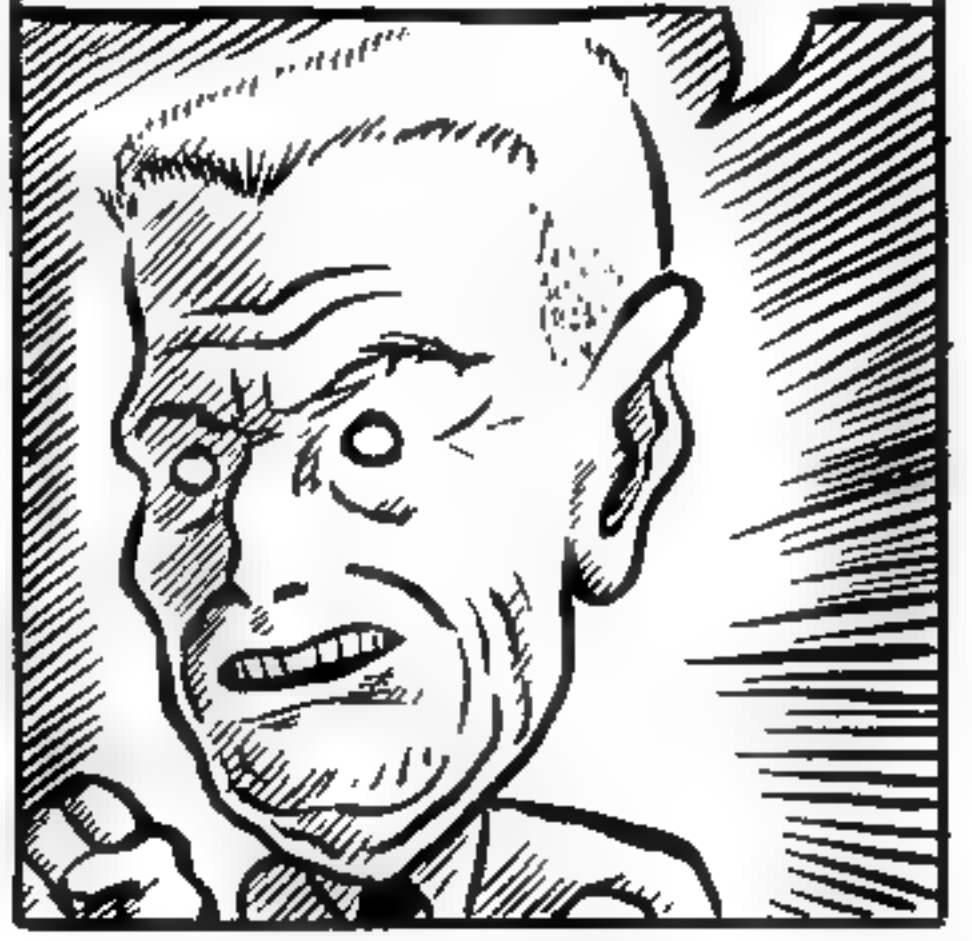
PAULA IS THE '90s. SHE EMBODIES THE LIFESTYLE AMERICANS DESIRE...



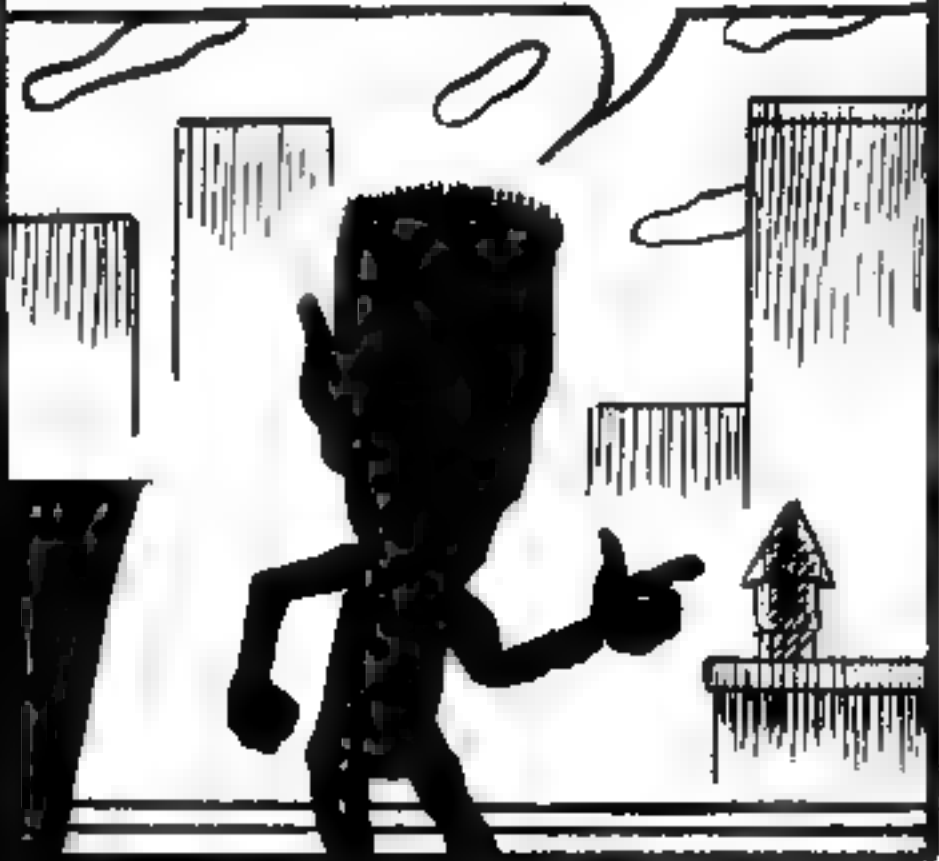
I WANT YOU TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE NU-START CEREALS...



WE'LL BEGIN WITH PAULA PUFFS AND WE'LL BUILD ON THAT.



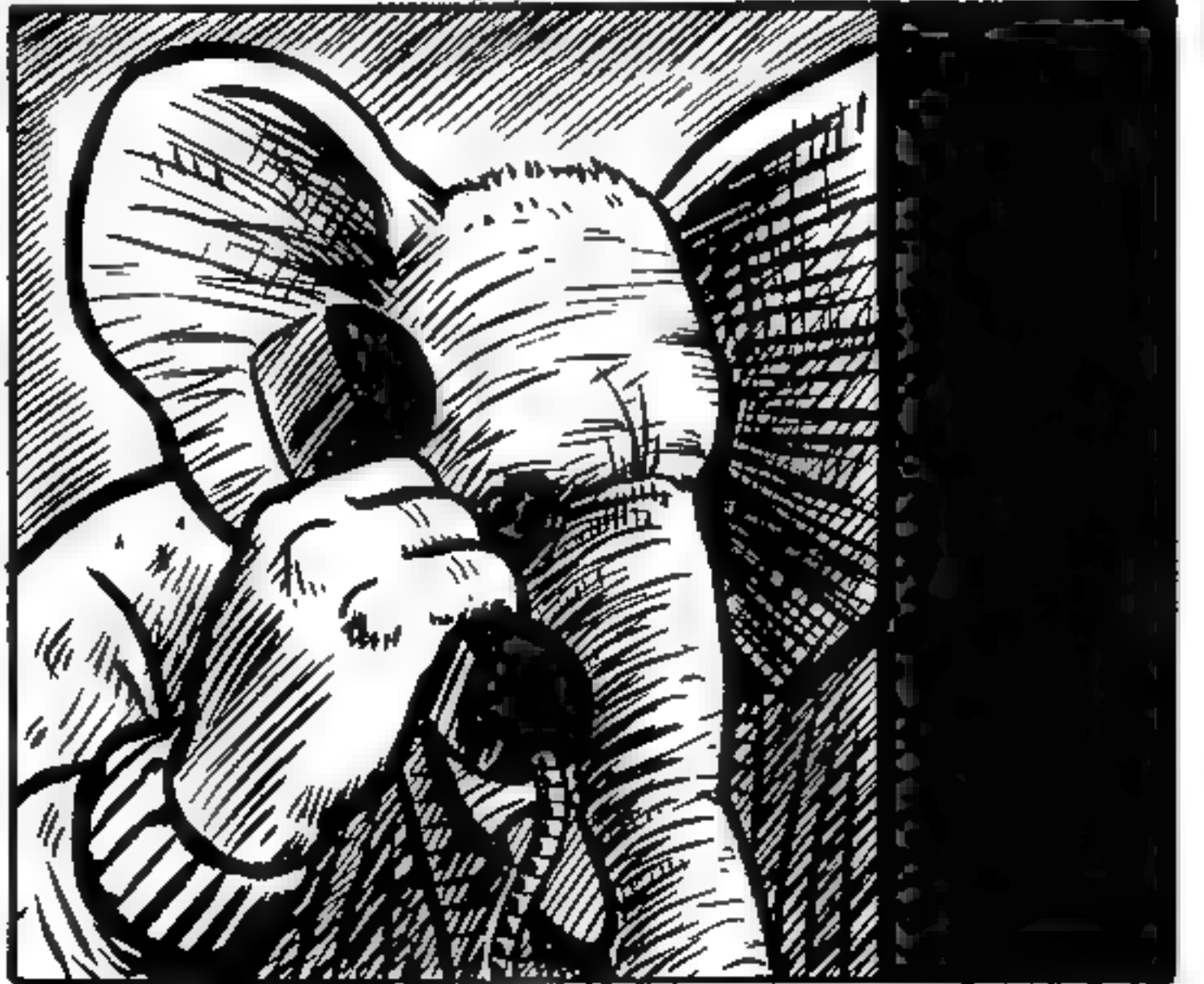
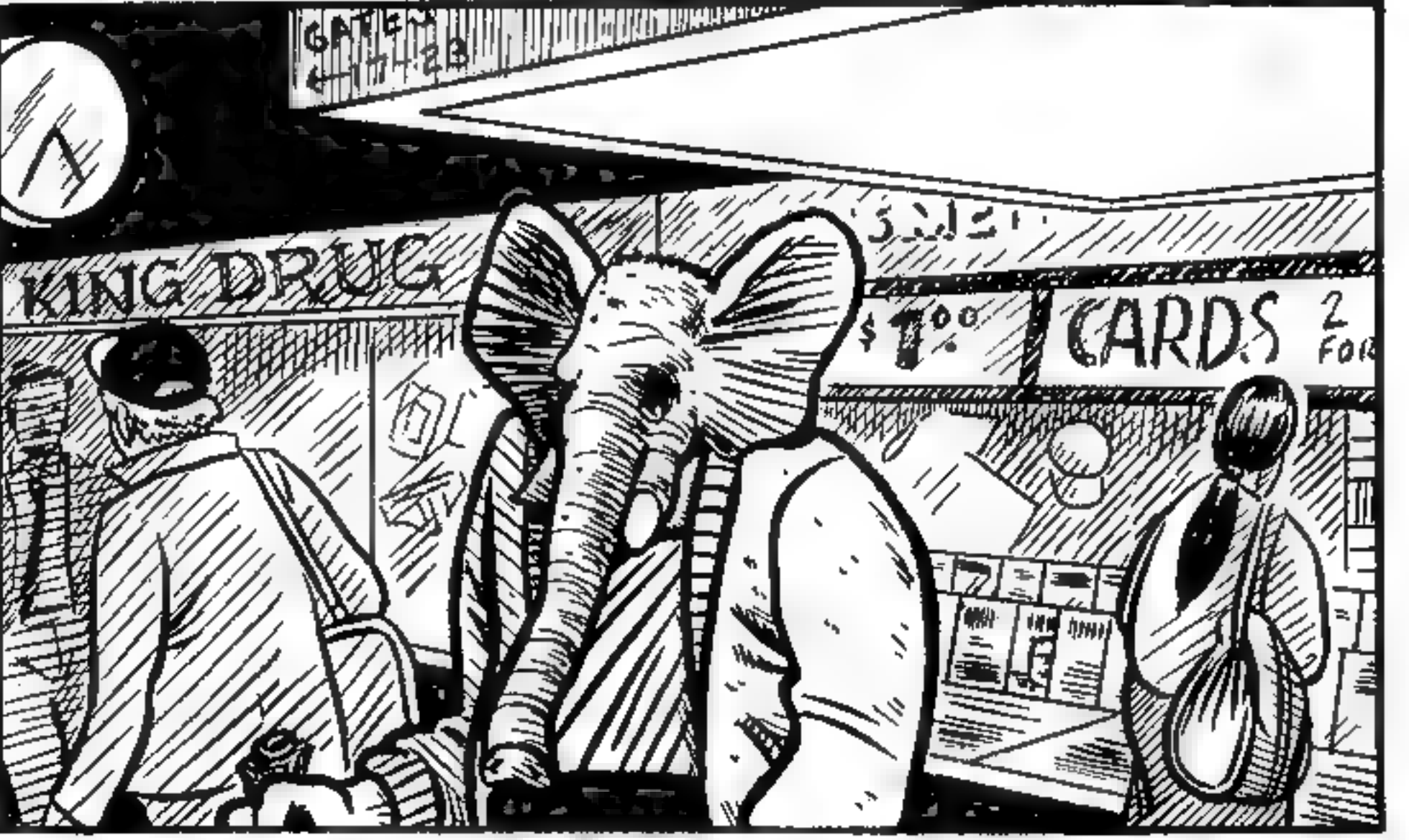
UNDER OUR SUPERVISION NU-START WILL GROW INTO A MAJOR FORCE IN THIS INDUSTRY.



THIS IS A RARE OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU, CARBUNKLE-I'M OFFERING YOU A JOB WITH KELCOG...



AND I'M WILLING TO PAY YOU A SUBSTANTIAL SALARY FOR YOUR SERVICES.







HELLO?
CHARLIE?
WHAT? HE IS?



WELL, I CAN BE THERE IN ABOUT FORTY MINUTES.... JUST MAKE SURE HE'S STILL THERE... YES, I'LL HURRY...



O.K., I WILL... THANKS, CHARLIE, YES, I'M LEAVING NOW... ALRIGHT... BYE.



THAT WAS CHARLIE KESSLER, I'M SORRY BUT I'VE GOT TO GO...



DOES ALL THIS HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOUR REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE JOB AT KELCOG?



GO AHEAD AND EAT, I SHOULD BE HOME BY NINE. CAN WE TALK THEN?



I'LL PICK UP A SANDWICH ON THE ROAD. LETS GO OUT FOR DINNER TOMORROW.



WE DON'T HAVE PLANS, DO WE? SO WE'LL TALK LATER, O.K.? ...BYE.

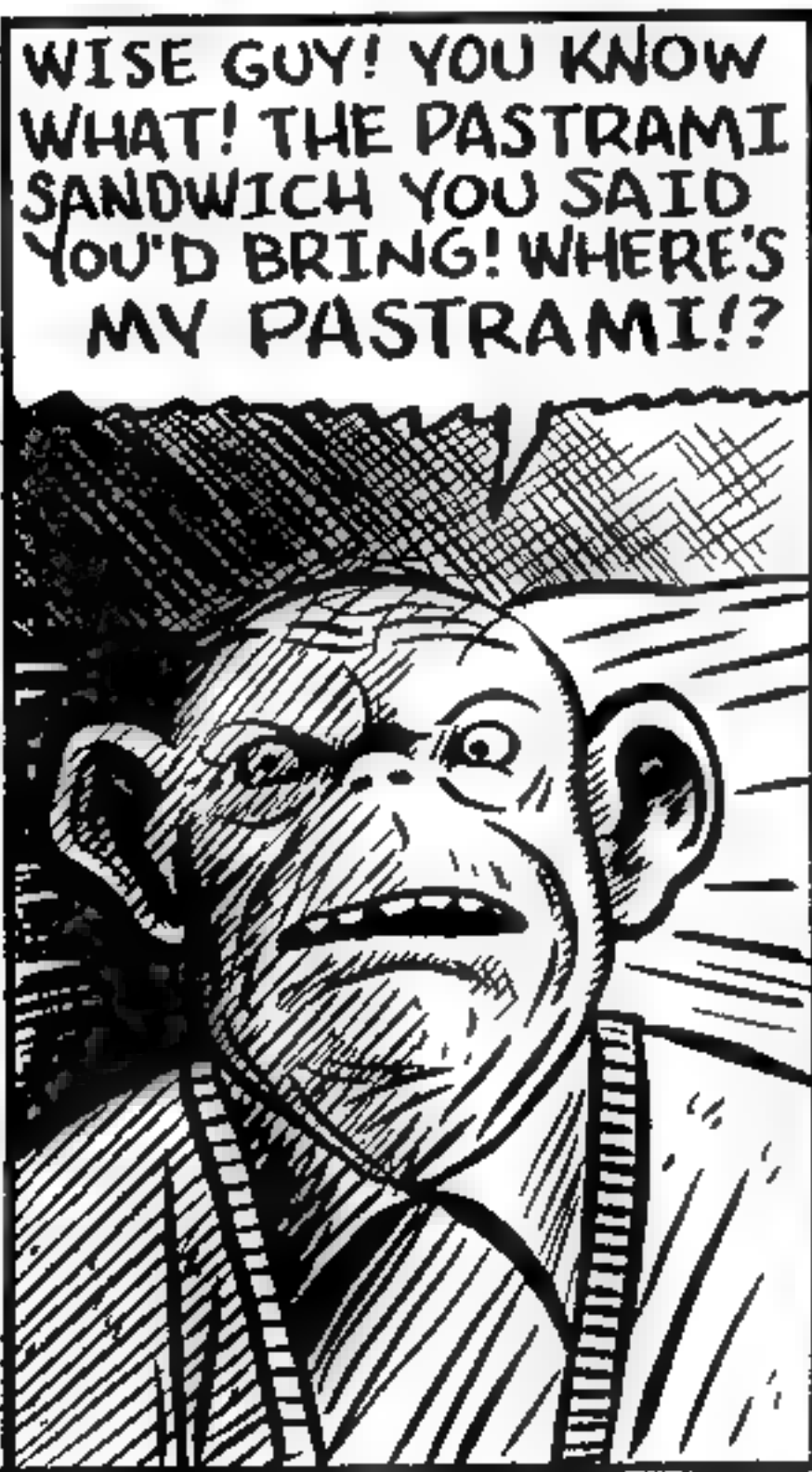
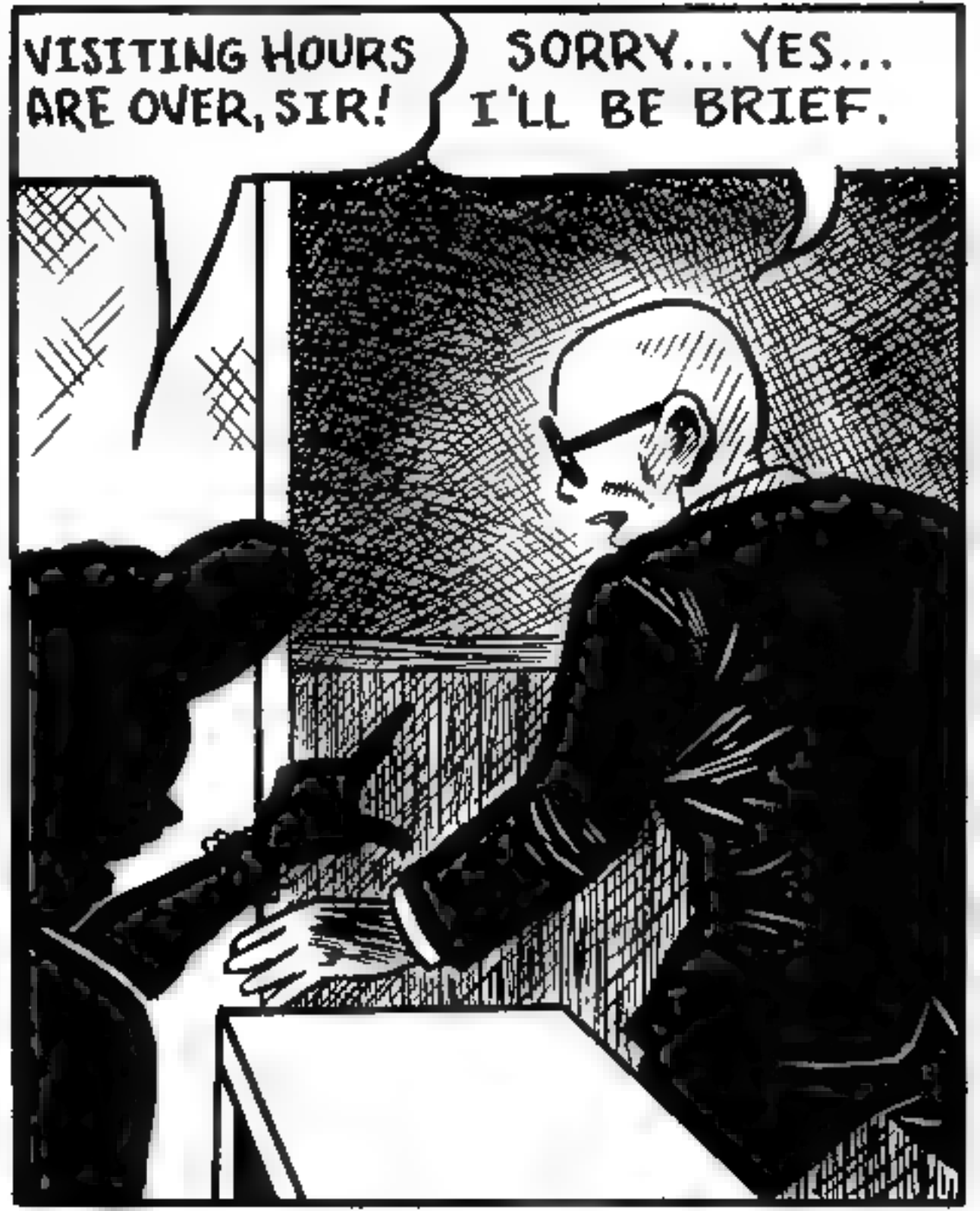


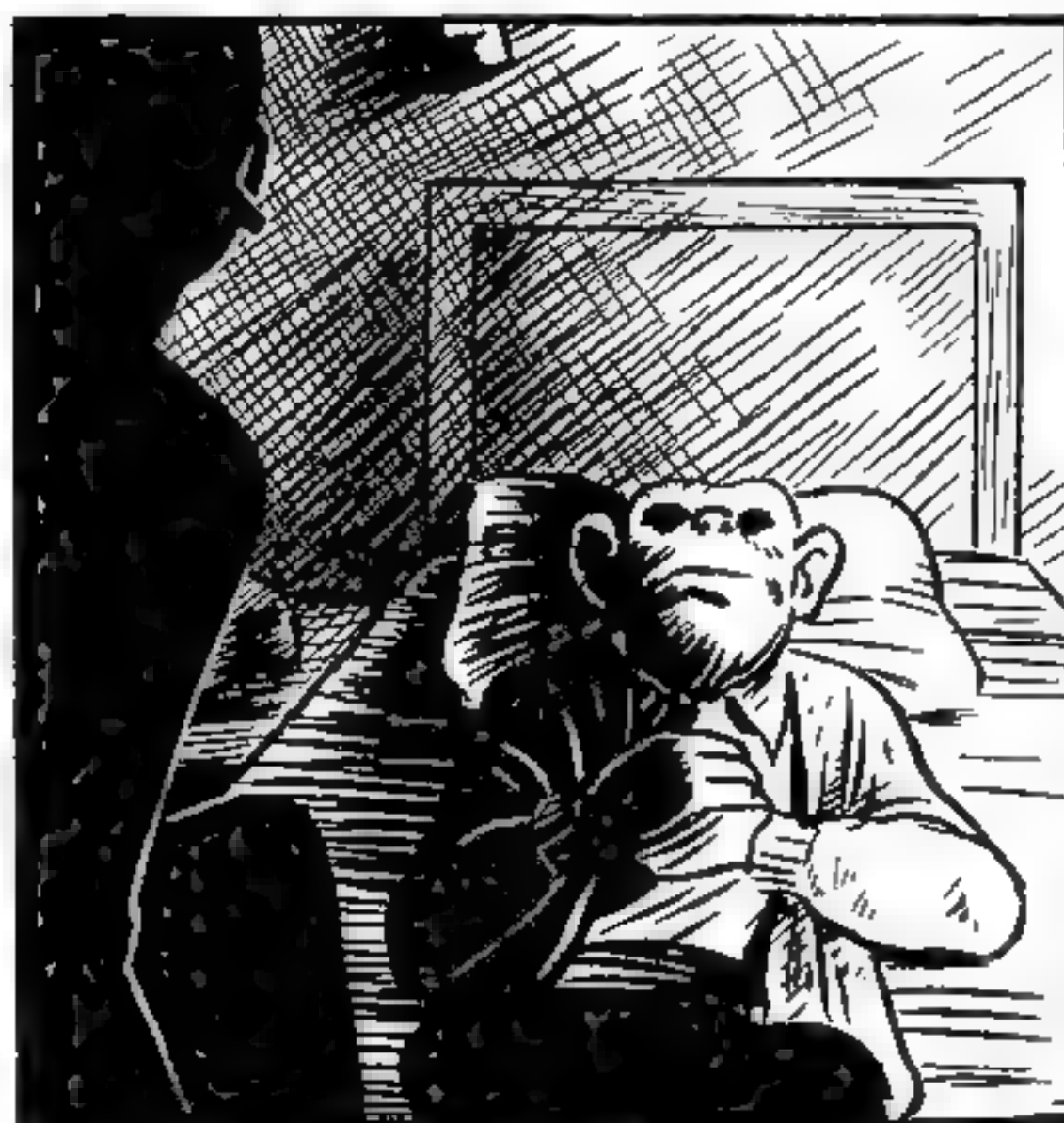
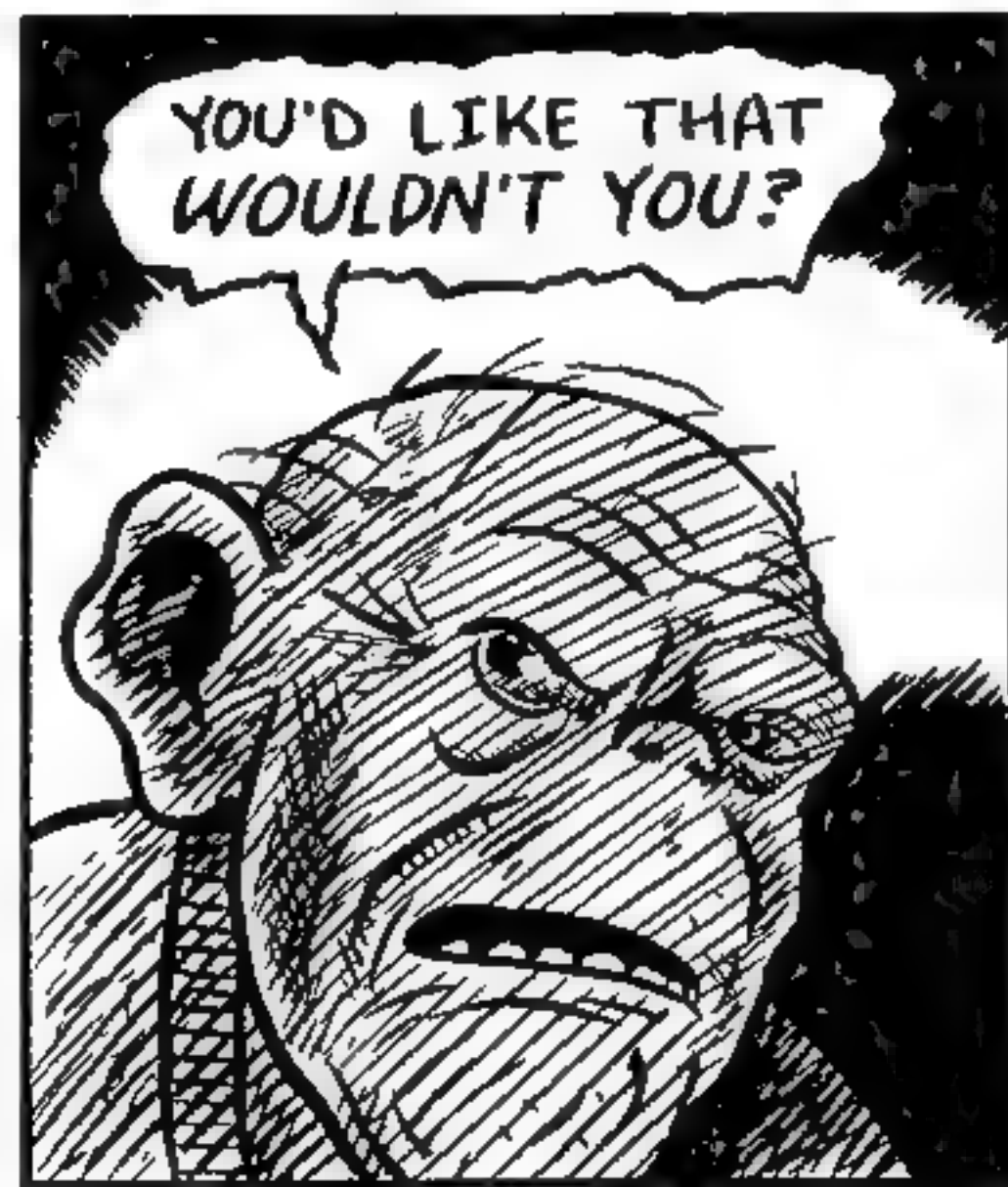
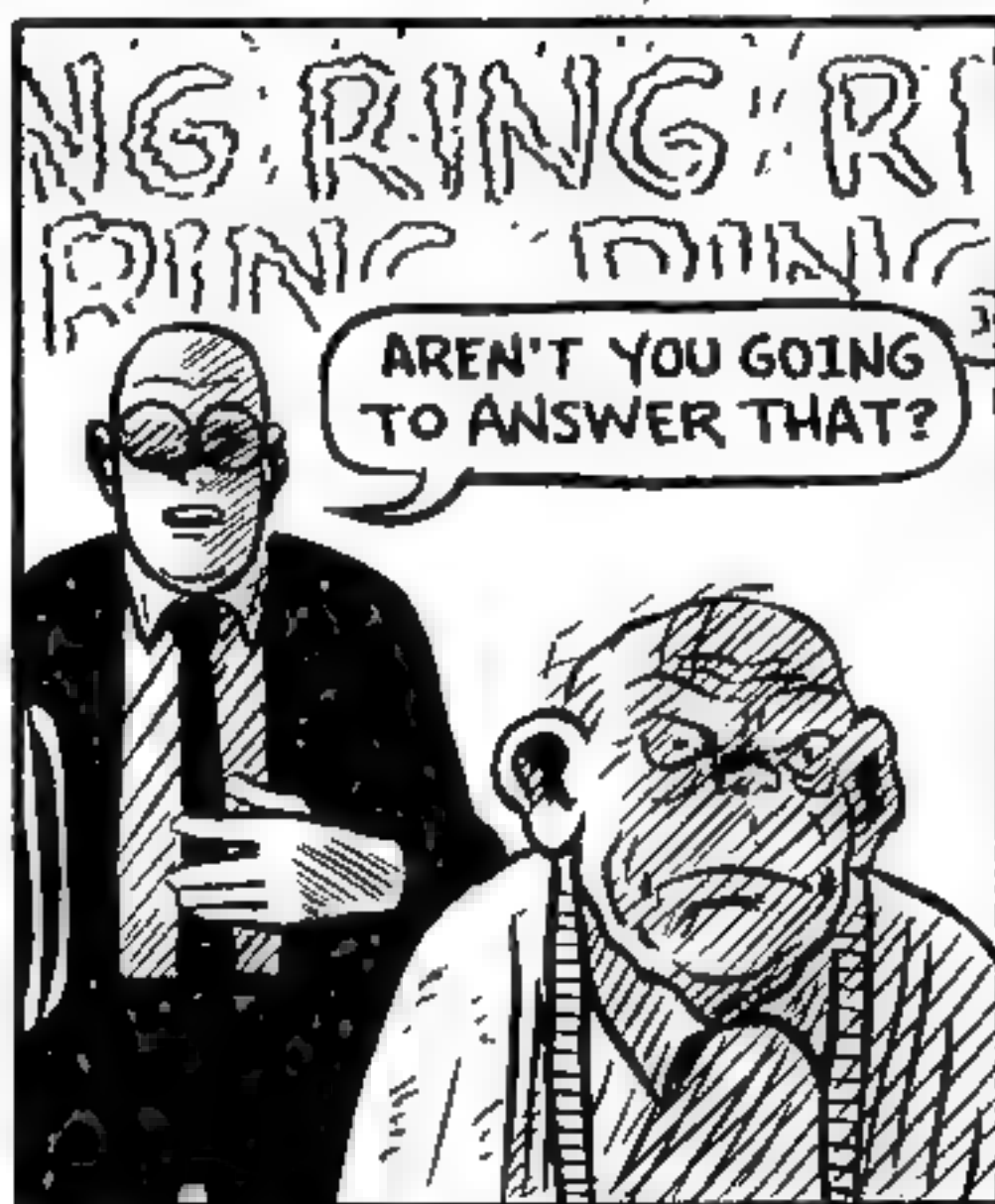
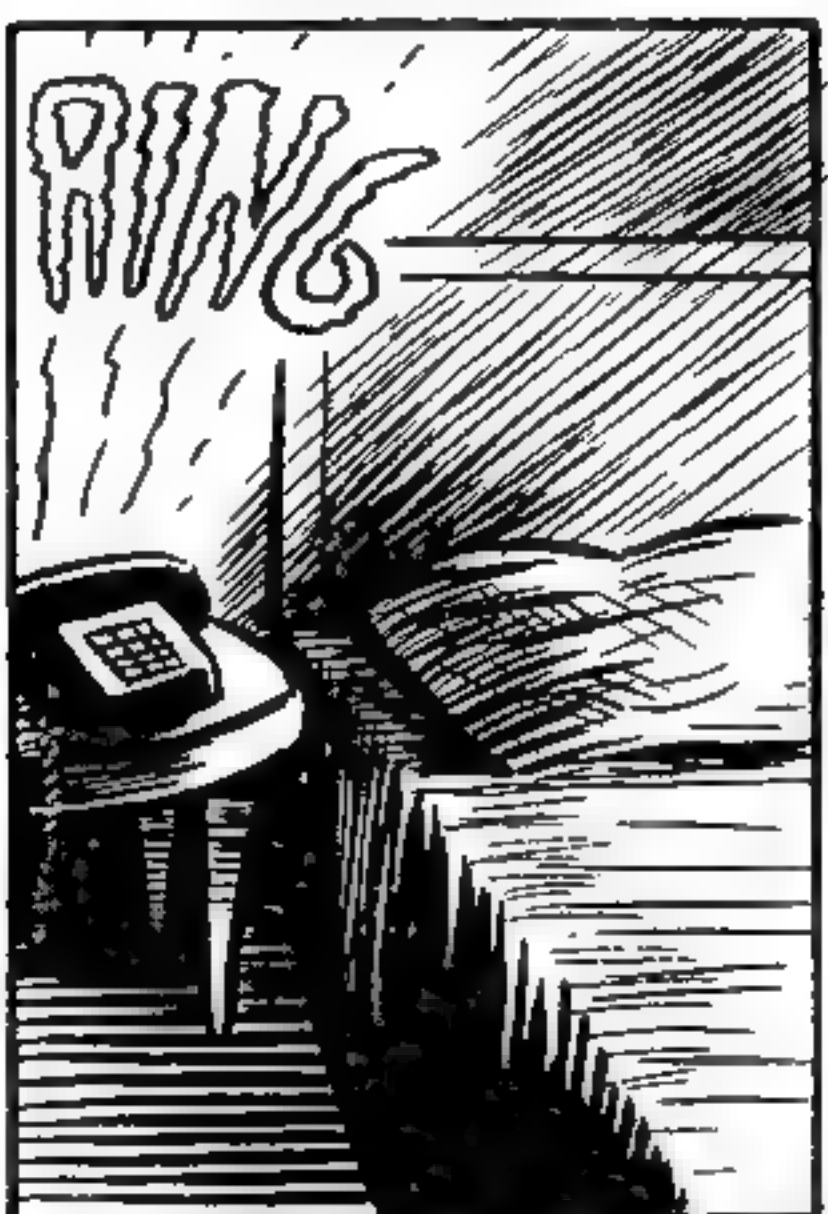
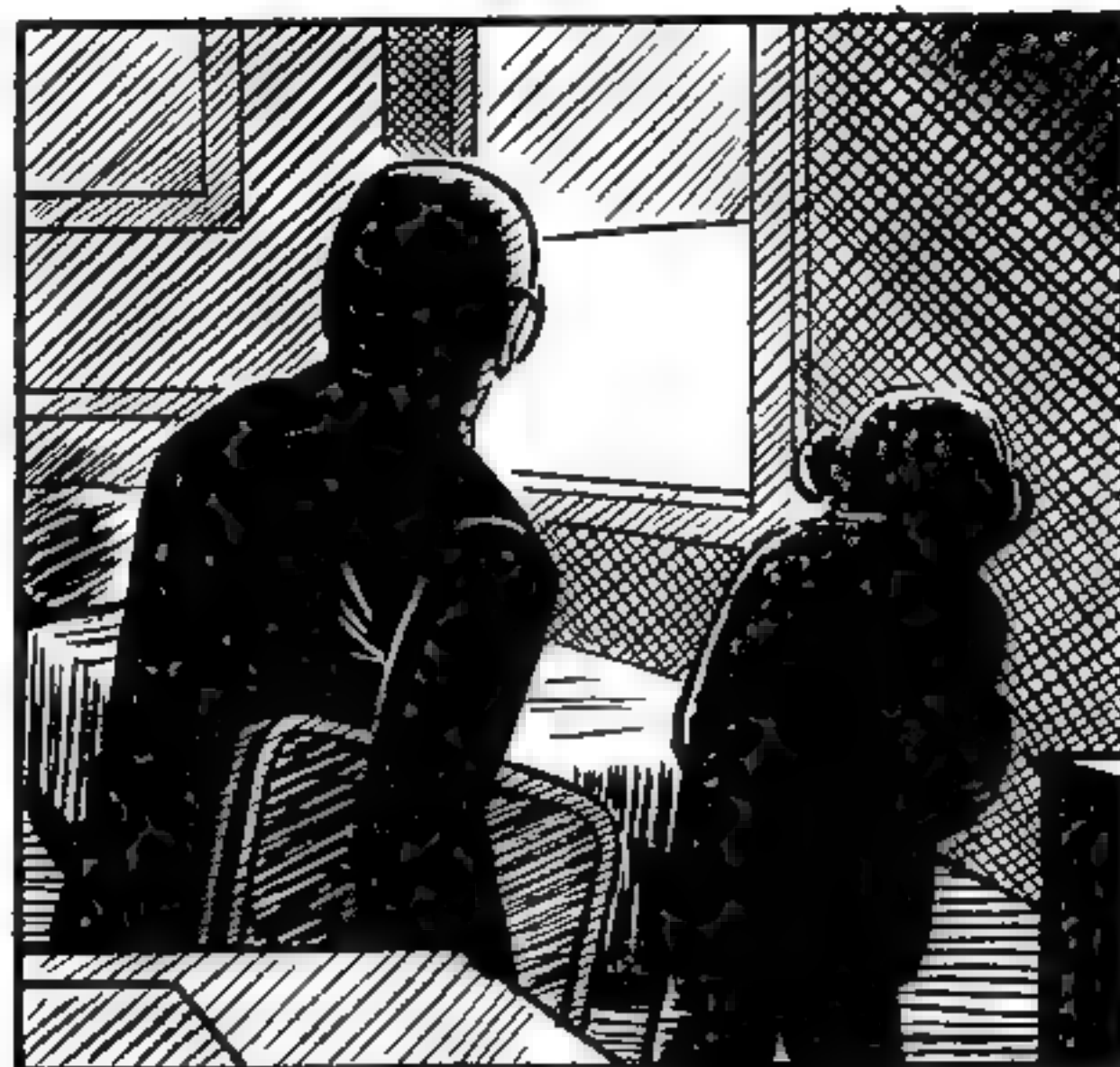
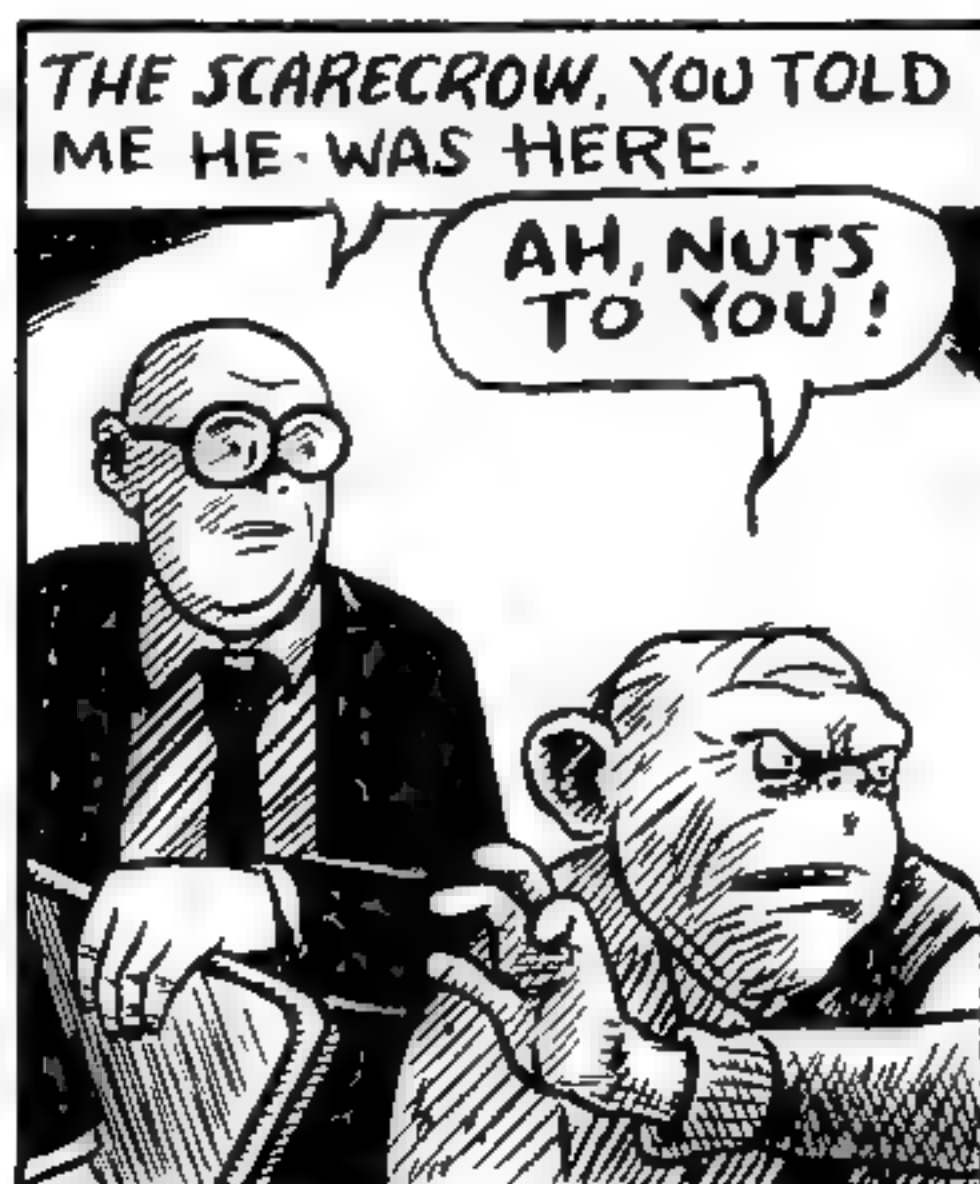
I MARRIED AN ASSHOLE, CARBUNKLE!

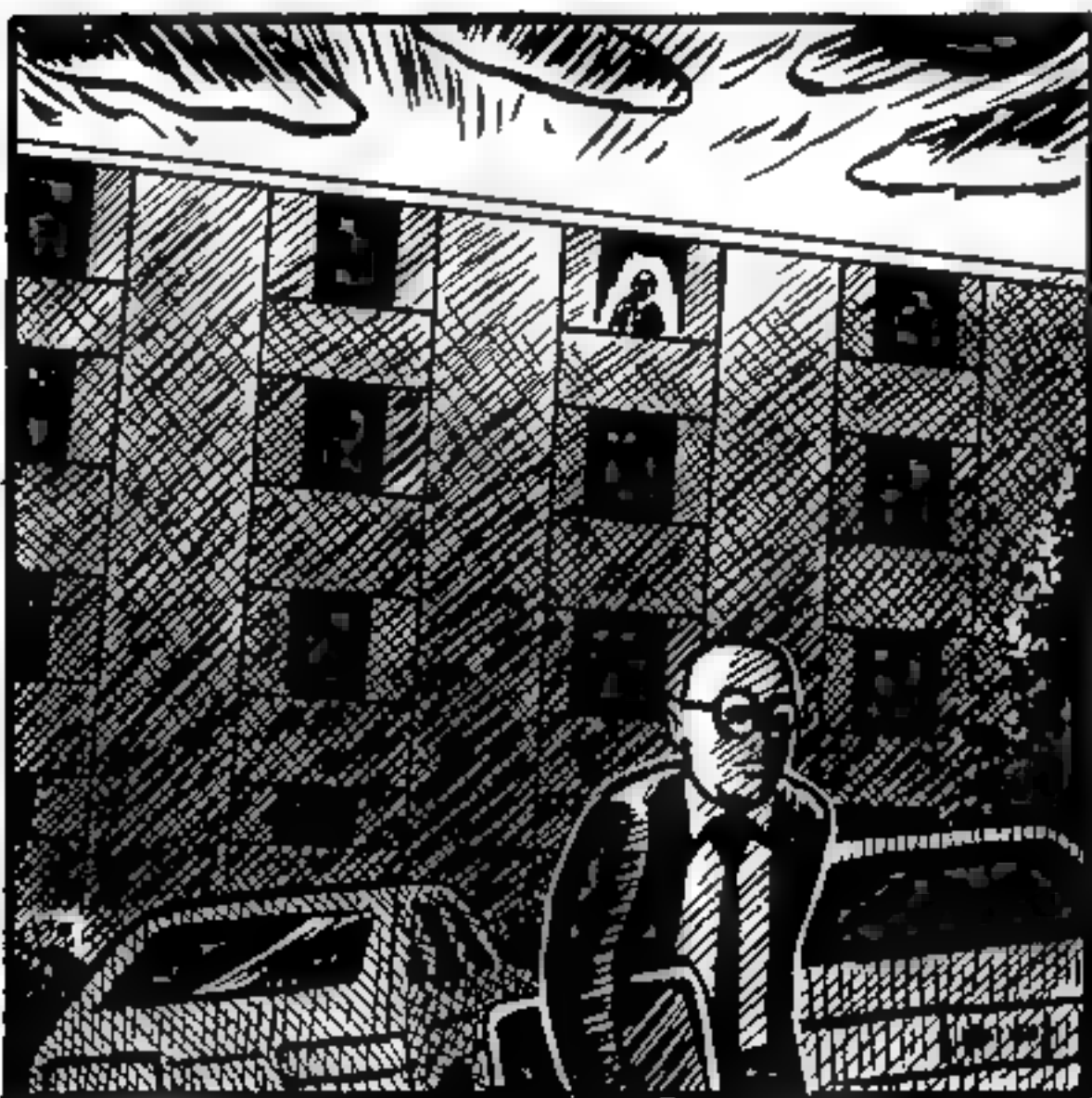


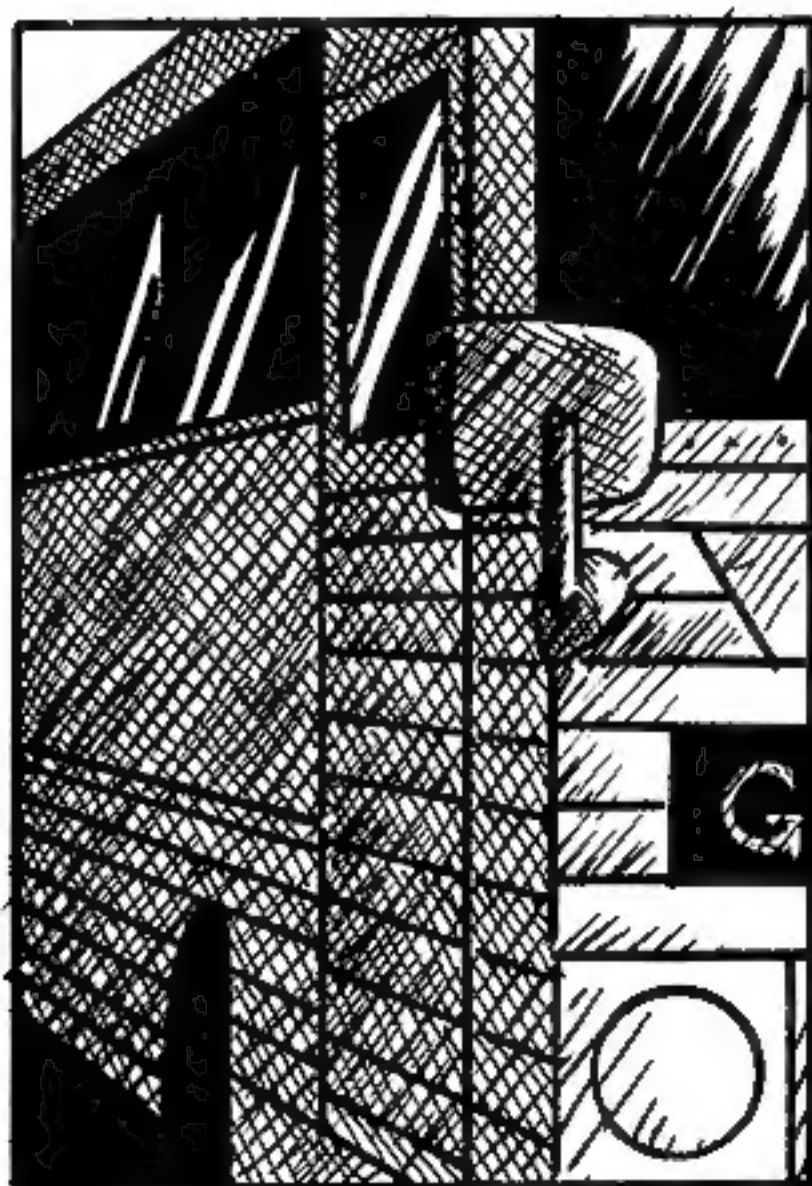
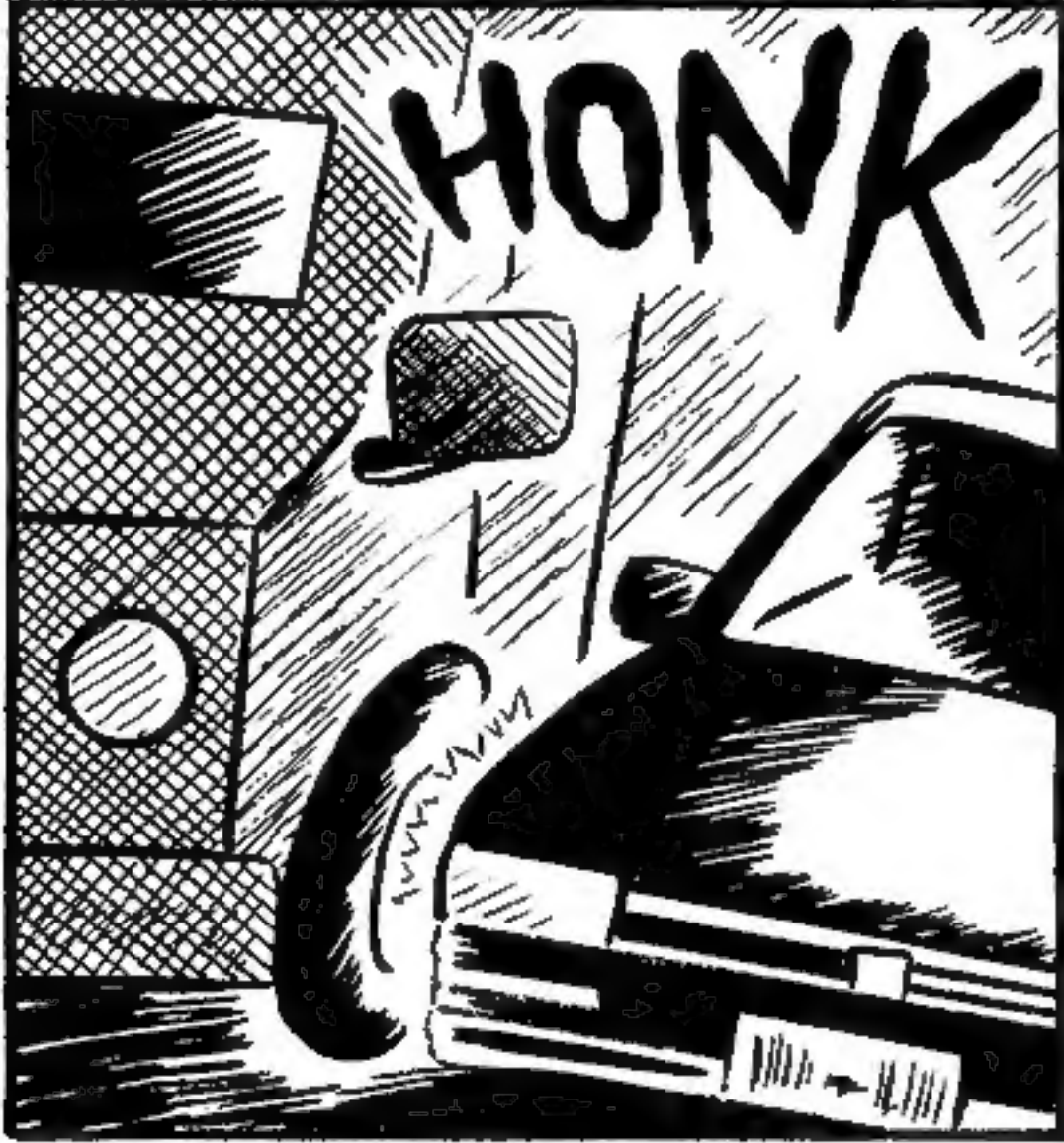
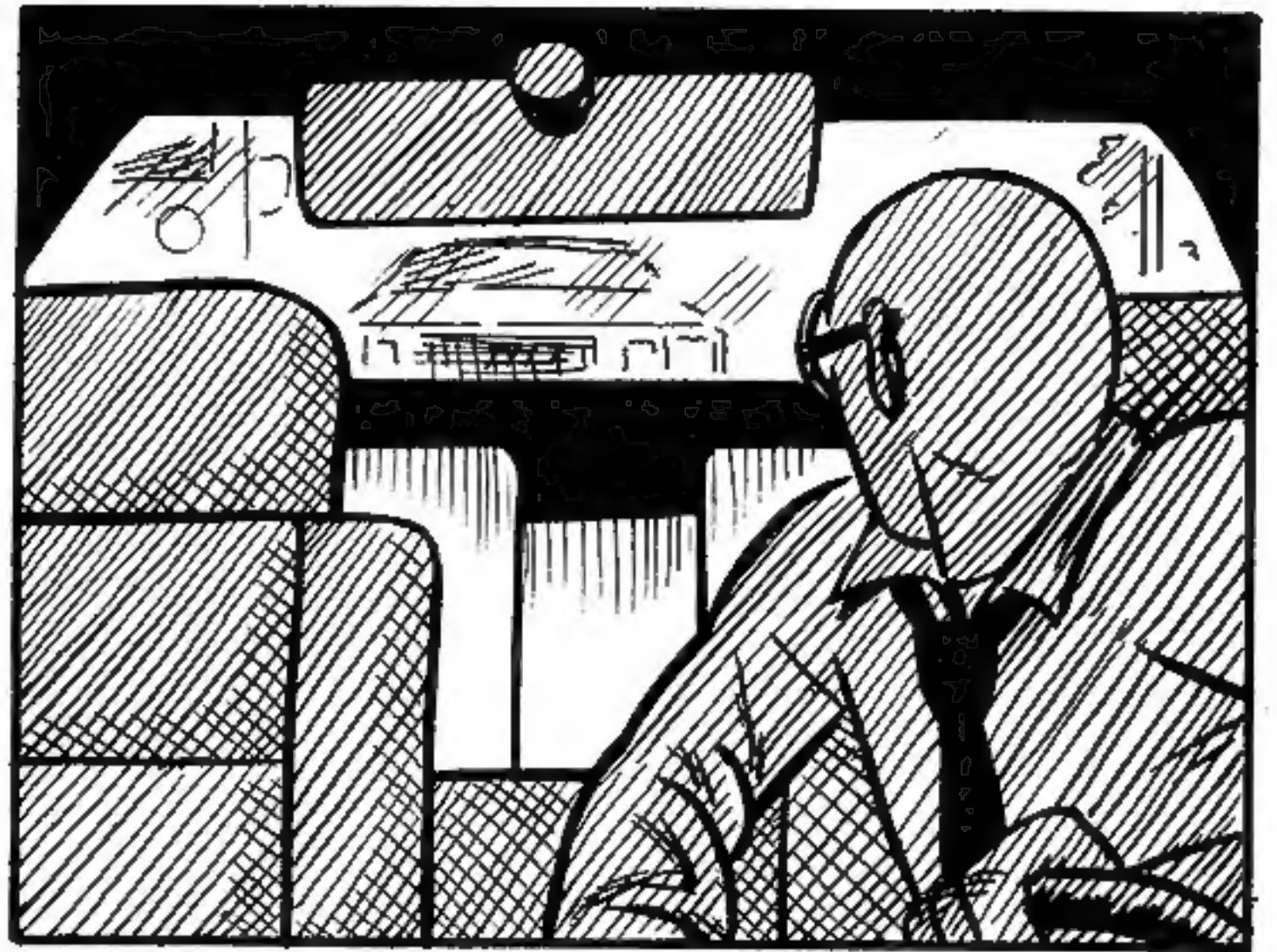
DO YOU HEAR ME, AN ASSHOLE!







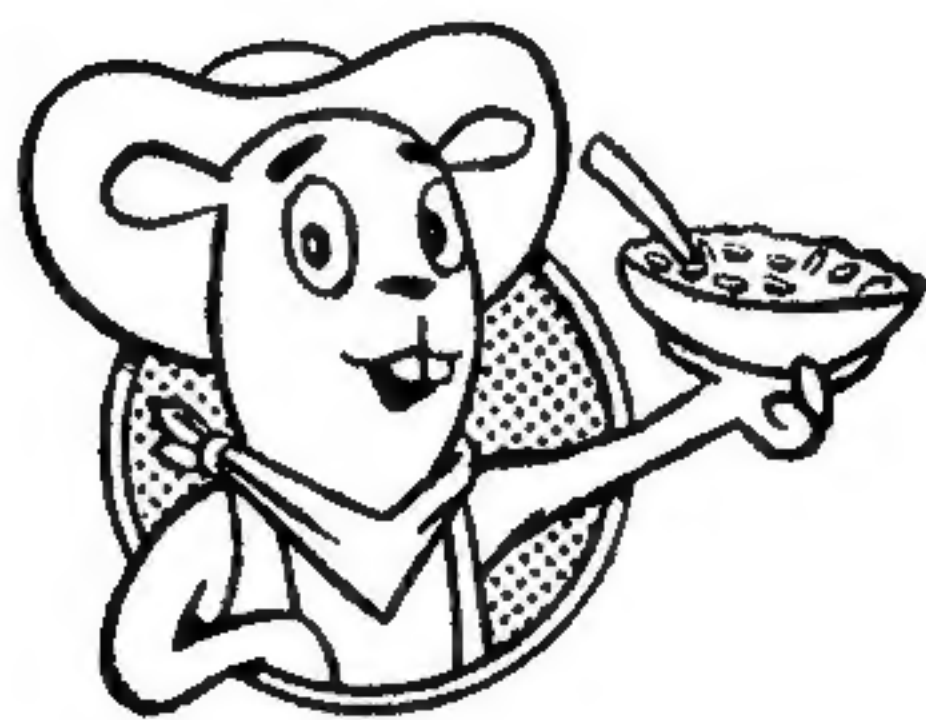




TO BE CONTINUED...

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Write: James Sturm P.O. Box 45432 Seattle, Washington 98145-0432



...The concept of the comic is what interested me. Your work has brought an enjoyment to me which I rarely find in comic work except in early *Mads* or *Zippy*, like a new way of looking at the world. I was saddened to read of your optical problems, and hope that things improve in the future for you.

When I was a boy I had the opportunity to tour Kellogg's plant. Battle Creek is south of here about an hour, so I went through their factory tour about three or four times. We would wear these little paper hats and at the end of the tour were given a box of cereal (variety packs) and/or a premium toy. Once my Dad decided we should go over to C.W. Post's and see if they had tours. They didn't, but had a little museum of the collection of Post's. It was an eccentric assortment. Some of the highlights were a painting of cows in a field whose eyes seemed to follow you wherever you stood. Another was two paintings of a gypsy type couple. One was of their honeymoon, the couple feeding each other at the table. The second was fifty years later, the couple doing the same thing but aged of course. The collection was also composed of other things, sleds and

parts of a greek frieze. They also reconstructed a room of C.W.'s which included a punching bag. I mainly remember the room was pretty dark...

Sincerely,
Frank J. Unruh
Grand Rapids, MI

...This is fresh clean disturbing stuff. I'm glad you are able to put it on paper—there are some who carry their equivalent around inside and try to play suburbia, only to end up with holes in their stomach lining. Long live expression!

Wanted to give you some feedback from another part of the planet than ours. I just returned from a few months in the Balkans. Western goods that make it past the embargo of former Yugoslavia are fast becoming an addiction. Anyway, while I was living in Sofia, Bulgaria, I found some of our little friends visiting. Brilliantly packaged boxes of our favorite U.S. cereals were lined up out of reach of drooling buyers, waiting for some wealthy local to come adopt them. The bug-eyed bird, the toucan...all there, all adorned and desired. Instead of a wall of color, lining a supermarket aisle, there is only one or two boxes of each brand, set in what amounts to a shrine, with lesser goods genuflecting at its base.

In the States we receive a good dose of cynicism every day. We have developed a partial immunity to the bone-crushing persuasion of Madison Avenue. But these big, swarthy kids have been let out of Kremlin Elementary school with no armor at all. Free enterprise

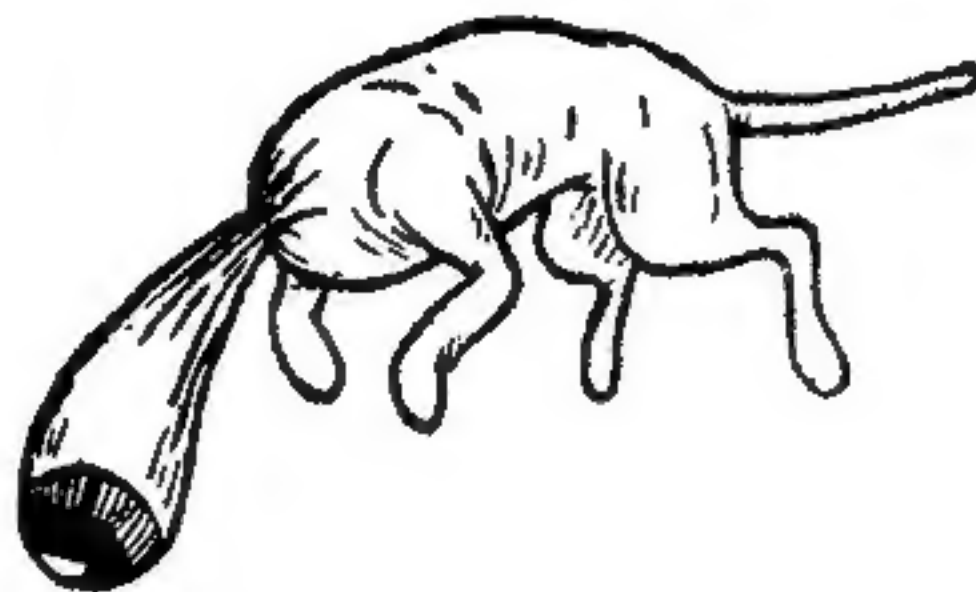
and commercial warfare are making themselves very much at home in the erstwhile Eastern Bloc (somewhere, Snap, Crackle, and Pop are getting a hell of a hard-on).

Stephanie Ward
Seattle, WA

...*The Cereal Killings*, bad pun, good comic. I have an Uncle named Burt. You must know him because your character is obviously based on him. Are you from New York? I'd show my Uncle your comic but I think he'd be offended by all the cursing (although he has a mouth like a sewer).

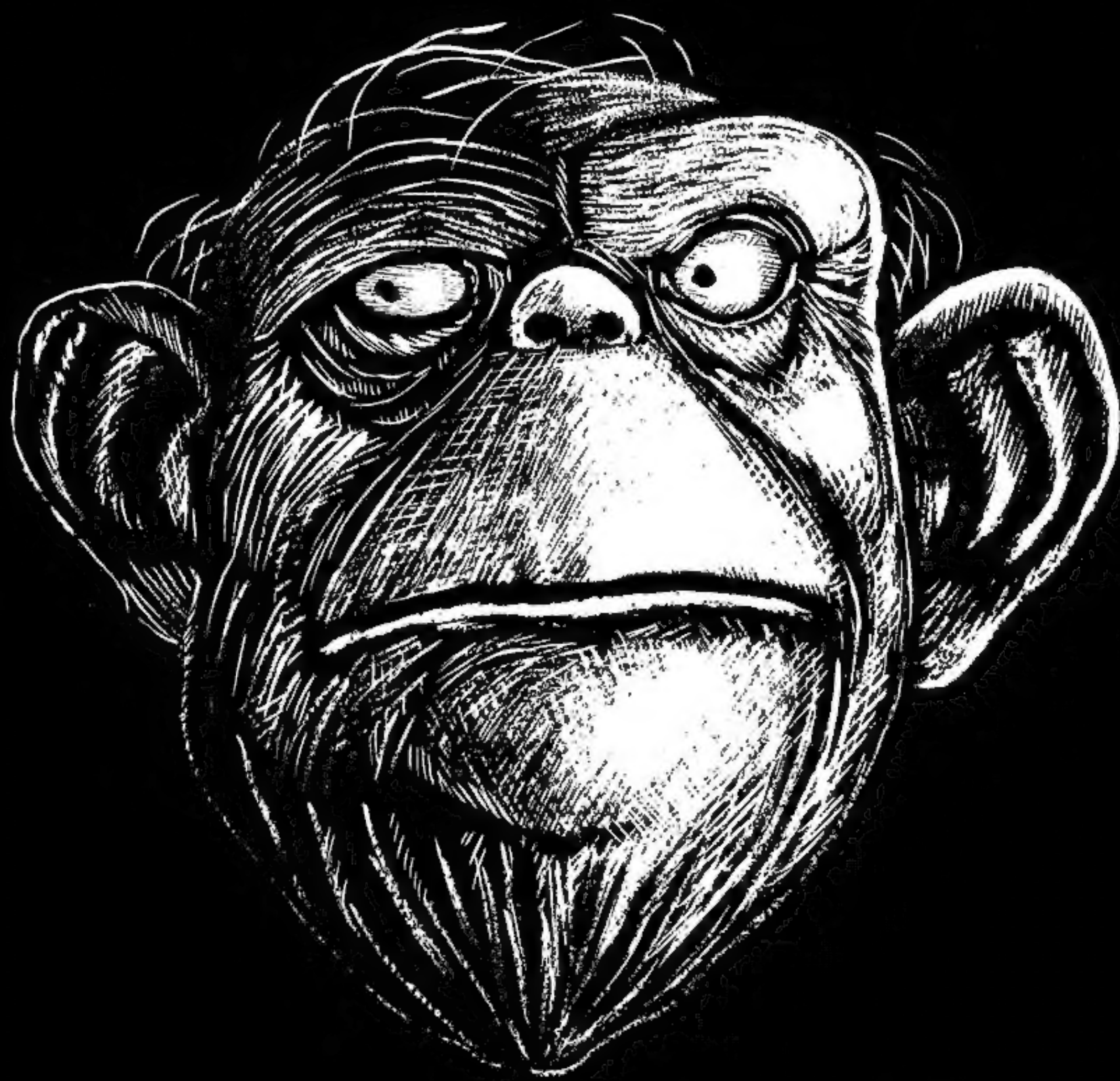
Tracy Feingold
Forest Hills, N.Y.

Yes, I'm from N.Y.; in fact, my cousins live in Forest Hills, Queens, but I don't know your Uncle Burt.

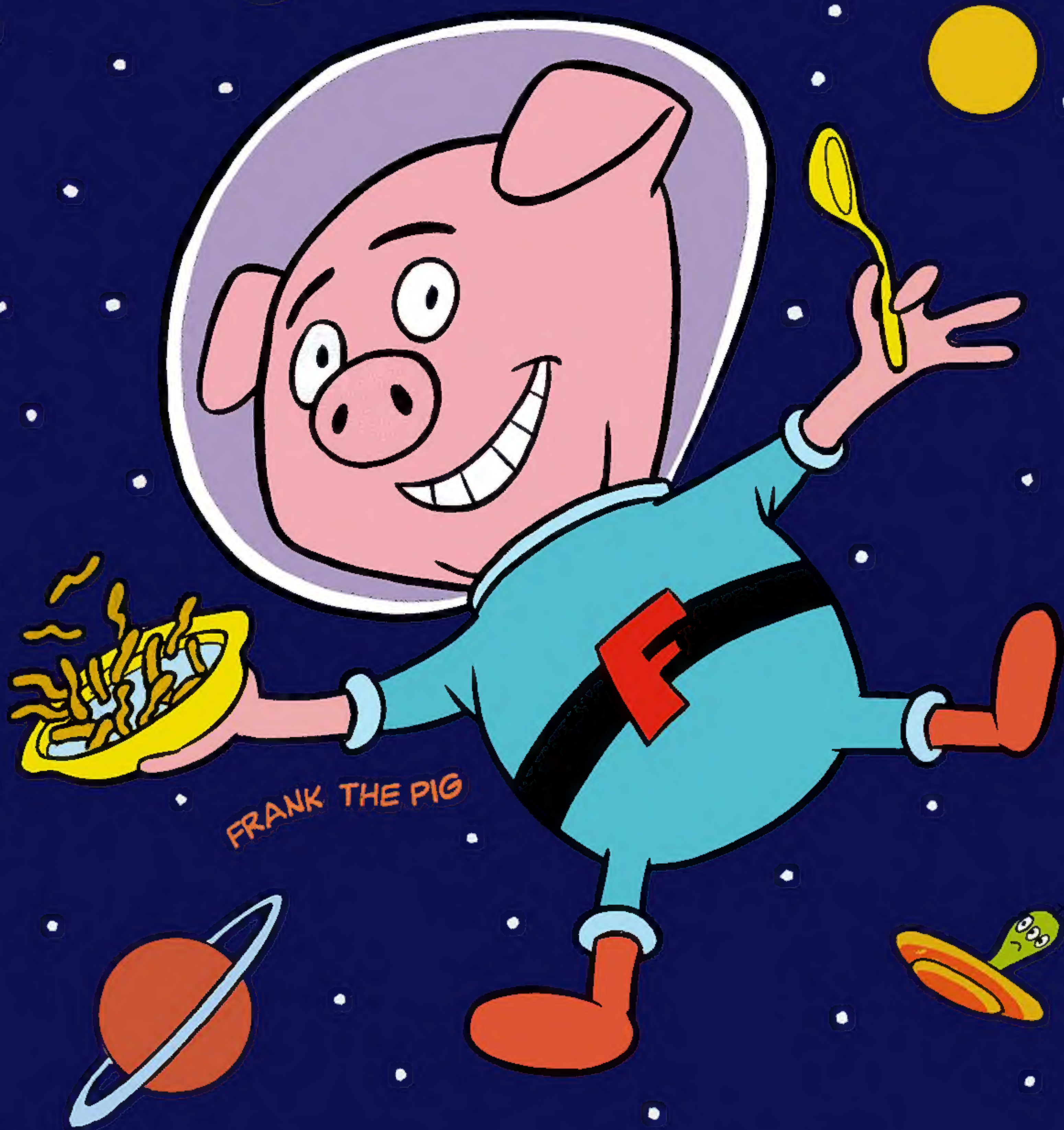


Thanks to all those who wrote in expressing concern about my eye. I'm pleased to report that my peeper is doing well.

Now, let's give credit where credit is due: Mark Lang for once again providing the splendid color on the front cover, Rachel Gross for her sharp eye and loving heart, and to Bob Sikoryak whose input, from the very beginning has been instrumental. Also thanks to the production squad at Fantagraphics—Roberta, Pat, Jim, and Dale—their skills only enhance my own.



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